

Hotline to Katanga

Between 1952 and the end of 1961 I was a frequent visitor to the Katanga although normally based over the border in what was then Northern Rhodesia or Zambia as it is called today. The giant Corporation of which I was Managing Director owned the high voltage transmission system extending deep into Belgian territory and under agreements

With Union Miniere du Haut Katanga and the Comite Special du Katanga imported power generated at the hydro-electric stations on the Lua, Laba River one of the tributaries of the Congo. This interconnection scheme which had cost millions of pounds had been made necessary by the ever growing demands of the Rhodesian Copper Mining Industry, one of the biggest mining complexes in the world. When plans for its introduction had been drawn up the Sambessi scheme was but a pipe dream on the part of the Southern Rhodesian Government. The Copper Mines had to look elsewhere to bridge the gap and the Katanga, with its vast water resources was the obvious answer. The scheme was in part financed by a Line of Credit of twenty-two million dollars made available by the Export Import Bank of Washington. This loan had to be serviced both as to capital and interest buy supplies of copper and cobalt to the American Strategic Stockpile. It was my job to see that this was done and apart from dealing with the Bank and Defence Materials Procurement Agency in Washington I had to liaise with the Belgians in Brussels as well as with the Director General of UMHK in Elisabethville, I had arrived from London before the ink was dry on the several Agreements involved so came in right at the beginning and stayed until the last dollar was repaid to the Americans.

I must be honest and admit that I preferred the continental way of life at Elisabethville to living amongst the mining community in the Rhodesian Copperbelt. I had more real friends there and enjoyed their company which perhaps accounted for the frequency of my visits over the border. For many years I had travelled the world and felt shut in when surrounded by vast mining townships all built to one rather dull pattern. The mining fraternity had sterling qualities but in general they were only concerned with winning ore from the ground and talked a language I didn't understand. Maybe I was the one out of step but the fact remains that in the nine years I served the Corporation my happiest days were spent either in Europe, America, or in the Katanga. The latter I came to know well and having been trained both in war and peace in the British Intelligence Service I was well equipped to note all that was going on both

politically and economically. This was to stand me in good stead in the days to come when it became important that my directors should be kept informed of all that was going on. The Katanga was our power life-line. Our investment was a heavy one. I had to watch over all this which I did with the help of my Belgian friends.

It didn't take me long to realise that there was a vast difference in the mining pattern of the Congo to that on the Copperbelt. This was particularly noticeable in regard to labour. On our mine we were beset with trouble and the European Mineworkers Union was all powerful in this respect. The majority of the mineworkers came from South Africa in order to enjoy the high rates of pay and they were constantly on the lookout to block any attempts to advance the African. Hardly a month passed without trouble of some kind and the Union went to such absurd lengths that often two men were required to do the work of one. The companies seemed powerless to resist these demands. The profit margin on copper was high and this was exploited by the European Union regardless of the fact that the worker enjoyed higher rates of pay and amenities than his fellow worker in South Africa. On the Copperbelt the miner was with few exceptions a free spender. If he played golf he had to have the finest set of matched clubs obtainable. They were some of the highest paid artisans in the world but all the time they wanted more and deliberately obstructed any attempts to rationalise the industry by making better use of labour.

It was quite different in the Congo. All the European miners were expatriates from Belgium engaged on contract. There were no Trade Unions and the men together with their wives and families saved for leave in Belgium. They also were well paid and had no complaints against the policy of UMHK which was to advance the African as fast as it was possible. What is more it worked and black and white lived in harmony.

Of course there was a big difference between the Copperbelt and the Katanga. In the latter territory all the mineral concessions were held by UMHK whereas in Rhodesia they were divided between the two groups, the Anglo American Corporation and Rhodesian Selection Trust. Indeed it is true to say that UMHK was the Katanga. It mined the richest copper deposits in the world and made enormous profits most of which were remitted back to Belgium. Not that the indigenous people were forgotten. The Europeans had nice houses and the native townships were well provided for. Loans and cost price materials were available for the Africans who wished to build their own homes with the result that one saw evidence of tribal influences in the mine compounds in contrast to the Copperbelt where standard type housing was the rule.

I think it is true to say that the Belgian authorities had neglected education the Congo but in fairness to UMHK it should be made known that before normal life in the Katanga was disrupted no less than 23,000 children were being educated in more than 120 schools and technical institutes at the Company's expense. These figures speak for themselves.

If the giant mining organisation of UMHK was at all guilty of neglect it flowed from its remote attitude towards the Belgian Administration. I gathered the impression over the years that it was too aloof from what went on outside of its own interests. The Governor of the Province was of course recognised but this amounted to a courtesy but there was a definite tendency to keep well clear of all Katangese affairs and matters that might have concerned such a large organisation. When I first began my visits to Elisabethville the British Consul, who had been there for some years, complained to me that he had never had the opportunity of getting to know the heads of either UMHK or the Comité Spécial du Katanga. My case was quite different. We were working partners as well as friends and from my days ironing out the Agreements in Brussels I had become close to the Belgians and was always assured of a warm welcome. A flat or villa was always at my disposal and I was entertained in the homes of my friends. But at the same time, I extended my circle of acquaintances beyond the offices and homes of those with whom I had business dealings. Through the British Consul I met an entirely different cross section of the population and at the exclusive club – the Cercle Albert – I met others who interested me. One of my Belgian friends was Colonel Crevecoeur who commanded the Katangese Forces and I got to know other officers of the Force Publique. At the time, little did any of us think that this pleasant way of life was drawing to a close and that politics would intervene and that eventually UMHK would be forced out of the country.

It was not until the end of 1958 or early in 1959 when rumours began to circulate that Belgium was considering granting independence to the Congo. In the capital Leopoldville, there was growing political agitation and signs of unrest, but it was all so far away from Elisabethville that no-one paid any attention to what the newspapers had to say. The Congo is such a vast territory that this was understandable. All was at peace in the Katanga apart from the odd tribal clash that generally happened at a weekend after a beer drinking session.

Then from Brussels came the definite news that Independence was to be granted. The young King was to pay a visit to the Congo to tell the people personally. Tribalism began to rear its head and there were further clashes. Tension began to build up and I realised the time had come for

me to start a series of reports for the benefit of my directors in Salisbury and Johannesburg.

This is what I had to say on 1st April 1960:

“Having recently visited Elisabethville on two occasions, and in the nature of day to day business being in close contact with many of the leading Belgians in the Katanga, my impressions of what is going on in the territory may be of interest. These impressions are based on personal observation and discussions with many Belgian acquaintances.

Last week in Elisabethville all was quiet after the previous weekend's rioting and bloodshed. But, if outwardly everything on the surface was just the same as I have known it for nearly seven years, it was easy to detect amongst the white population a strong undercurrent of uncertainty and apprehension regarding the future.

The ordinary man in the street is still somewhat stunned by the suddenness of his Government's decisions in Brussels. He is conscious of being on the stage of one of the boldest political experiments so far attempted in a Colonial Territory. The Katanga is indeed an unhappy country, mitigated only by the goodwill manifested between Black and White. The benefits of a policy of multiracialism are now apparent but only time will show whether, during the excitements of an election, and the Independence which will follow on 30th June, this spirit of friendliness and co-operation will be sustained. Many Belgians I have talked with doubt whether the African mentality will withstand this sudden emergence to power and so called freedom. One old faithful with thirty years service as a house servant, enquired from his employer whether this thing “independence” was coming by sea or air! Yet he is now eligible to cast a vote.

The greatest danger to the Belgian Government's decision to place the Congo under African political domination is the poor calibre and inexperience of the so called leaders, and the manner in which the tribal influence is already being exploited.

The recent rioting was in the nature of Tribal Bank Holiday. There is no telling when it may be sparked off again for there is clearly conflict between the Kasai, Bluba, Lunda and Balumba. All the ingredients are present to bring about further bloodshed, and with men on the scene such as Patrice Lumumba, a suspected communist under direction from Ghana, Joseph Kasuvuba, Presidents of the Abako, Sendwe with his following of Kasai and Baluba, and Moise Tshombe with his Lunda, Balumba, and a section of Baluba, the stage is truly set for a holocaust on the same lines

as it has been my misfortune to witness in the Far East. The pattern is similar, but experienced leaders in this case are totally lacking.

I understand that the casualties in the recent riots were considerably higher than reported in the Press. Last week the situation was under firm military control, but smouldering underneath, according to reliable observers. As the election campaign intensifies, so will the tribal tension.

As far as the Katanga is concerned, it would appear on the surface that the Balubakat Party is gaining ground at the expense of the Conakat Party led by Moise Tshombe. The latter, who is a Moderate, is said to be receiving support from Union Miniere. His advisors are five very able Belgians, and they are directing his campaign from behind the scenes. I am informed that the Conakat's policy is to consolidate its position in the rural areas, and nearer the date of the elections to make a concerted drive in the towns. To this extent they have succeeded in winning the support of Paramount Chief Mwatiamvwa of the Lunda who lives in Northern Rhodesia. Yet there are stories that the levy of 14/6 per head of population is in some rural areas finding its way elsewhere than to the Party funds!

There has been no mass exodus of panic amongst the white population, although some of the foreigners have either left the country or sent away their families. There has certainly been a run on the banks, and there is no doubt that for this reason the authorities have now introduced measures of strict currency control. In this connection a separate report is attached for information.

Whilst there has been no panic, it is true to say that precautionary measures are being taken by many Belgians. Silver and valuables have been packed away and in some instances sent out of the country for safe custody. Parents of young children, particularly those with teenage daughters are undoubtedly worried, and it is possible that if there is tribal explosion, a large number will seek temporary asylum in Rhodesia.

Communications between the Katanga and Rhodesia are notoriously bad, consisting only of a single and unreliable telephone link belonging to the B.C.K. Railways, terminating at Ndola. In this connection whilst at Elisabethville, I was approached by the British Consul, and by arrangement with UMHK, it has been agreed that should the Consul wish to pass urgent messages to the Federal Government or Senior Provincial Commissioner at Ndola, The Corporation's private channels will be placed at his disposal, and message relayed by me.

Apart from the dangers inherent in the intrusion of tribal influences into power politics, is the almost certain conflict of opinion regarding the distribution of revenue between the proposed Federal and Provincial Governments. With Kasuvuba from Leopoldville seeking dictatorship, (and there is no denying his influence, for in the December 1959 elections on his instructions some half a million voters stayed away from the polls), this issue is going to be a major one, particularly as Moise Tshombe's Conakat Party is all out to retain the harvest of UMHK's profits within the Katanga.

I trust that this report conveys no sense of panic, either on this side of the border or in the Katanga. The majority of Belgian officials, mining employees and business men are determined to see this experiment through, whilst conscious of the dangers inherent in such a bold plan to give power to a people who are far from ready to assume responsibility for governing the country."

Note: The private communication channels referred to were in due course to become the Hotline and at one stage the only means of getting information out of the Katanga. It served the British Foreign Office, the Consul, the Red Cross, and the Federal Government of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. It was operated jointly by UMHK and ourselves and became a lifeline serving humanity, as later in this book I will disclose.

My next report is dated 25th June. Already I had warned that if there was trouble, large numbers of refugees would descend on Rhodesia. This warning had been passed to the authorities. In my second report I draw attention to the strength of the Army (the Force Publique) and how it might act on its own account under certain circumstances.

This is what I had to say:

"I have just returned from another visit to Elisabethville and record my impressions for what they are worth.

The political scene in the Congo is, if anything, more confused than ever. With only a week to go before Independence is declared there is utter chaos. All this is well covered by daily reports in the Press and requires no repetition by me. But what has escaped notice in the Press is that last weekend the authorities in the Katanga feared a Coup d'état by the impatient and somewhat anxious Moise Tshombe of Conakat, and unobtrusively at midnight manned all public buildings with armed troops. That situation remains. Tshombe, who is most certainly being well backed financially, is fearful of the growing strength in the Katanga of Sendwe who is of the Patrice Lumumba political school. There is almost daily

jockeying from position between these two men, and although Tshombe commands approximately 60% support as a result of the Provincial elections anything is possible in such a confused and power hungry community.

Apart from the presence of armed troops and police, Elisabethville is normal. Preparations for Independence Day are in full swing with giant archways of bamboo being erected in the town centre. The authorities are taking strict precautions against unlawful entry into the Katanga from Rhodesia by Europeans or Africans. My car was searched by troops at a road block outside of Elisabethville and a careful watch is being kept to prevent the smuggling of arms into the territory.

The Army is certainly in control of the situation which prompts an interesting line of thought. Surely the Army is the key to the immediate political future of any leader or party in the Congo. I do not suggest an immediate Coup d'état as a possibility, but such is the strength of the Army that it could influence the thinking of the main political leaders, or, if chaos developed, take over control on its own account.

I know, on good authority, that still further units of Belgian troops have recently arrived. This seems rather strange when a week hence the Army is due to become the servants of an all Black Government.

There is still a manifestation of goodwill between Black and White and certainly no exodus of Europeans. But there is an easily detected undercurrent of uncertainty about the future. Judging by my experience on this visit, there may be a Black Market developing in currency. At the border, an Armenian offered me 180 francs for any Rhodesian sterling I wished to sell, and my wine merchant would have preferred payment in this way had I been in possession of any Rhodesian currency.

In conclusion I would again refer to my remarks about the Army. The next few weeks could provide the answer."... (Note: It did).

Shortly after writing this report I had occasion to travel once again to Elisabethville to attend a meeting with UMHK. The Independence celebrations had gone off without undue incidents and the town seemed quiet. My business finished my wife and I lunched at the Circle Albert with an old friend, a Belgian, who also had as a guest the Deputy Chief of the Force Publique. Throughout lunch the latter was very jittery in fact I would say that he was a bundle of nerves. This proved to be the correct diagnosis for not long afterwards he was invalided out of the Service.

Luncheon over the soldier excused himself leaving the three of us to drink our coffee on the club veranda. Our host was one of the best informed

members of the Belgian community and now in private conversation he summed up the situation from a security point of view. It was a dismal picture of the future he painted. Retiring from the Belgian Cavalry where he had served with distinction he had lived in the Katanga for many years and really understood the mentality of the African. He described them as totally unpredictable and it was his fear that once the air had settled after the celebrations there would be trouble.

How right he was. Trouble was certainly brewing as my wife and I were to discover within five miles of leaving the town on our homeward journey. Rounding a bend we were halted at a road block manned by about thirty desperate looking soldiery in the uniforms of the Force Publique. Several of them clambered on the car and ordered me to drive a few hundred yards where another road block of barrels had been hurriedly placed across the road. The car was searched by men armed with automatic weapons and they became more and more infuriated and vocal as their search revealed nothing but a spare wheel and tools.

I demanded that they produce an officer but the only answer I got was jeers. It began to develop into quite an ugly scene as a dozen or so of them began rocking the car as if to overturn it. I just had to get away from this armed angry mob and fortunately I spotted a gap just wide enough to get me to safety if we could distract their attention for a few seconds.

I whispered to my wife to give them cigarettes and fortunately in the glove compartment was a new packet of fifty. With great presence of mind she first handed out a few into dirty clutching hands and then when the whole mob rushed forward to get their share she threw the box over their heads. Dropping their weapons there was a mad scramble. This was my opportunity. My car, an eight cylinder Pontiac, leapt forward and through the gap and driving full out we headed homewards without a shot being fired.

Then we knew the reason for the Force Publique Colonel's jitters. Anticipating the mutiny which was to follow within days, gangs of these thugs had already broken away from their units and were on the rampage. They were certainly dangerously hostile and had ignored our British Passports. Later, men of this ilk were joined by local had hats and became a menace on the road demanding money from travellers and in some cases smashing up cars and beating up passengers. It was with feelings of relief that we crossed into Rhodesia where all was quiet and peaceful.

My forebodings were coming true. The Force Publique was on the verge of mutiny and this I immediately reported to the local authorities and by telephone to my directors in Salisbury. The writing was clearly on the wall for all to see and I know that it would be only a matter of days before the balloon went up in Elisabethville.

On the 9th July in answer to my enquiry the Director General of UMHK admitted that the situation had deteriorated. I was inundated with requests from Belgian friends to look after their wives and children. All the mines on the Copperbelt were alerted and refugee centres organised so all was in readiness for the flood that was to develop into a deluge during the next few hours. By July 11th more than 6000 men, women and children had reached safety.

The Congo crisis was now front page news throughout the world, but we were more concerned with our local problem. Fortunately the authorities had been forewarned and there were no lack of helpers to feed and care for the refugees. Special trains were run to Salisbury from where the Belgian Government organised an airlift back to Brussels but this was mainly for the women and children.

We had little sleep during those days. My house was bursting at the seams with the families of friends and I was on 24 hour call to deal with urgent matters coming over my private channels. I was in direct contact with Elisabethville and Jadotville where the essential staffs remained on duty. With the temporary collapse of all forms of administration and with the risk of being overrun by rebels I have nothing but praise for the men who stayed behind in the trouble spots. The senior Belgians never left their posts or if they did it was only to see their families to safety after which they returned to the Katanga. There was some shooting and at Jadotville the Burgermaster, a retired employee of UMHK, was shot dead when visiting a disturbed area in the city. Accompanying him was a young Belgian engineer of my acquaintance who was held as a hostage by the rebels. His release was arranged by Sgt. Major Lundula, for whom he had nothing but praise for he risked being shot out of hand. Lundula, later promoted to the rank of General by Lumumba, was expelled from Katanga as a Communist. Strange things happened in those days!

Whilst all this was going on I had no time to write reports and instead sent a daily "SITREP" by telex to my directors in Salisbury. These can be summarised as follows:

The mass exodus of Europeans from the Katanga was largely stimulated by false rumours and panic. There is no doubt that Communist influence fanned the flames as the following facts go to prove. Before and whilst

the Belgians were leaving their homes in such haste the wildest stories were being circulated and believed. According to these stories the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Katanga and the Director General of Union Miniere were hanging in the city square having been executed by the rebels. A senior clerk in one of the UMHK subsidiary companies was caught red handed operating a powerful transmitter hidden in a cellar. It is more than probable that false propaganda was put out by Radio Katanga. This cannot be confirmed as at the time the situation was so confused that the evacuees had not idea as to which station they were listening to but as at a later date one of the newsreaders fell under suspicion and on investigation proved to be a well know French Communist. His story is worth telling as it demonstrates the lengths the Communists will go to infiltrate agents into such vital propaganda machines as a National Radio network.

It all happened this way. I was listening to Salisbury radio which was describing an interview with a Belgian who told a graphic story of his escape from the Katanga into Rhodesia through one of the least used border posts. According to this man's account there was heavy fighting in Elisabethville and in order to cross the frontier he had had to shoot his way through and was lucky to be alive. He gave his name as Rene Martin and claimed that he was a senior official of the Belgian Government. Acting in good faith the Salisbury Station put this story on the air as an item of sensational news. Now it so happened that I knew all was completely quiet in Elisabethville as that very afternoon I had received most reassuring news from my Belgian contacts. Knowing that one of my staff had that day crossed through the border post in question I rang him only to learn that he had seen not a trace of trouble at the frontier.

To me the matter was not a trivial one and a complete fabrication of the truth so I immediately asked for a check to be made in Elisabethville so that I could alert the Salisbury Special Branch if my hunch proved to be correct. It was. This was the reply I got:

"Rault Dennis is a Frenchman who goes under the name of Rene Martin. He has been ere some time and was employed as a broadcaster by Radio Katanga. This position he obtained on the strength of a brilliant testimonial which inter alia said that he had been employed for five years by Radio Europe No 1. However, one of the officials of Radio Katanga, having his doubts about the man, wrote to Radio Europe to see if his suspicions were justified. The reply was to the effect that the man was completely unknown to them. Dennis Rault was dismissed and later prosecuted for forgery and embezzlement. He escaped from Elisabethville to Rhodesia in a car he had hired from SIMA, a local auto dealer, taking

with him a sub-machine gun he had stolen from the house of an Army Officer and 23,000 francs he had embezzled from the Lido Restaurant owner. He is believed to be a dangerous communist, also an adventurer and swindler. He will be looking for new victims in Rhodesia."

The above was quickly passed on to the Special Branch and in a matter of hours the man was arrested in Salisbury and deported back to France.

When it came to analysing the reasons behind the run out of so many Belgians in such haste, (one couple arrived at my house wearing their night attire), I was struck by the numbers of responsible men and said that if only they had been allowed to evacuate their families before the Force Publique mutinied they would have stayed at their posts. They claimed that the mutiny came as no surprise to them and that for weeks prior to the crisis they had begged their head offices in Elisabethville to allow them to send their families to places of safety. This applied particularly to men employed at outlying stations such as the Hydro-Stations on the Lualaba. But Elisabethville had turned a deaf ear to all these requests. Whether this was Government policy or because the Head Offices were aloof from what was going on around them I do not know although suspect that the refusal was based on the desire to avoid any measures that would be interpreted as signs of panic.

As far as the Hydro-Electric Stations were concerned, I can sympathise with the employees. They were remotely situated and each and every one was classified as a Military Zone with strict security enforced. The Belgians were inclined to overdo this as an American friend of mine learned to his cost. He was the Chief Economist of the Export Import Bank of Washington and I was showing him over the UMHK installations in the Katanga. We were inspecting the Delcommune Station and in the act of walking over barrage when Harry Rowntree unslung his camera to take a photo of the dam. In a trice a heavily armed soldier of the Force Publique had seized the camera from him and looked as if he was going to smash it. Only the intervention of an officer prevented an ugly scene after I had shown my credentials. It was surrounded by men like those that the engineers and their families found themselves after Independence was declared. No wonder they were worried. Some took the law into their own hands as in the case of the Franqui Station. Here, five Belgian engineers, having become suspicious of the Force Publique guards numbering about thirty men, disarmed them at midnight the day before the mutiny took place. They threw all the arms and ammunition into the dam!

There is no doubt that the mutiny of the Force Publique brought world focus to bear on the Congo problems. The political war had begun. The Congolese Government in Leopoldville sought the aid of the United Nations which body in turn demanded that Belgium should withdraw her troops. Yet, whilst the latter unreasonable demand was being made, and with chaos throughout the country, it was only natural that the Belgians should reinforce its garrisons in order to restore order. Moise Tshombe proclaimed the independence of Katanga and for some reason believed that his secession from the Central Government would be supported by Britain and also Rhodesia, (The Federation), in fact he appealed to them for help in the form of troops and police. Meanwhile, in the Katanga, Tshombe took firm steps to restore order disarming such of the Force Publique as remained and generally behaving in a responsible manner. This was his chance to demonstrate to the world his powers of leadership and to those who were not biased in their thinking this he did most effectively.

Sir Roy Welensky, Prime Minister of the Federation, was placed in a difficult position. He believed, and I think rightly, that his country bordering as it was on the Katanga, could not sit back complacently and watch its neighbouring state be reduced into anarchy though the intervention of Leopoldville based communist inclined political upstarts. Far too much was at stake. On this issue he was at loggerheads with Whitehall and but for pressure from London might have given assistance to Tshombe. It was not within his tough political nature to sit back and await developments over his border but no matter what his private feelings were in this matter, his political judgement prevailed and he refused Tshombe's appeal for help.

Tshombe's position was quite understandable to those of us who know his country. Katanga was a self contained entity the rest of the Congo being foreign to it. Rhodesia and the Katanga had much in common apart from sharing a common boundary. Tshombe's own Paramount Chief of the Lunda tribe actually lived in N. Rhodesia. The frontier was not even properly demarcated.

But at the Security Council Britain had agreed with the other major powers that the Central Government of the Congo would be recognised and in support of this resolution a large Military and Civilian force should be sent in to restore order and work towards a unified country. It was stemming from this decision that the trouble began.

Although for the next two months all was calm in the Katanga apart from unrest in the coal mining area of Luena to the north this was not so in the

rest of the Congo which was rapidly going from bad to worse. I had to rely on the Press for news of what was going on and it was not until 23rd September that I submitted my next report to Salisbury. This is what I had to say:

“There is no doubt whatsoever that the Metropolitan Government in Brussels is using everything in its power to support the Governments of M Tshombe in the Katanga. But there is also a realisation that ultimately, (no matter the pattern of overall Government which finally emerges from the present chaos), the Katanga will, and must, assist financially the impoverished Provinces which combine to make this vast territory.

M. Tshombe is undoubtedly growing in stature, and with his Ministers, and hordes of Belgian advisors, combines to make the only reasonable government in existence in the Congo. There is evidence of this on all sides. Even at the unimportant Frontier Post at Kasumbalesa, now manned by Africans, there is an air of efficiency hitherto lacking when a Belgian was in charge.

Sitting at Elisabethville, whilst I was there, was a Mission consisting of more than twenty Belgian experts on finance and economics, supported by a senior member of the Belgian Foreign Office. Talking with them I gathered the impression that to all intents and purposes the Belgians seem to ignore the larger picture and to concentrate on the build up of the Katanga, as if, having handed over the Congo to the Africans, they had forgotten to mention that the Katanga was excluded from the offer.

M. Tshombe is preaching a policy of co-operation with the Belgians and he appears to be popular with them. At the same time it is said of him that he refuses to be courted by any particular section of the European community. But in typical African fashion he is being quite ruthless in his dealings with his own people. He has recently been censured most severely by the United Nations for his actions in the coal mining area of Luena. Talking with well known journalists, I gathered the impression that UNO had exaggerated this incident, and having slapped down Lumumba, were now bending over backwards to demonstrate their impartiality by criticising Tshombe at every opportunity. This line of argument appeared reasonable until I met the UN officer who had investigated the incident on the spot. He told me that there had definitely been a massacre of Baluba's of the Lumumba persuasion. He had personally counted fifty dead and this was by no means all. Apparently, Munango, Minister of the Interior, had directed the operation. He is known as the strong man in the Katanga Government and is much feared.

At the moment it is impossible to forecast how things will work out in the Province. But one thing is clear, a much larger UN force is required if tribal conflict throughout the country is to be held in check.

Chapter Two

The Role of the United Nations in the Katanga

In my discussions with Union Miniere officials, it was clear that the Company's policy is to stand clear of U.N.O. activities, although I did meet and was introduced to Mr Berendsen the UN representative in the Katanga. He was in the company of M. Assoignon, Director General of UMHK.

The U.N.O. role is indeed a difficult one, particularly for the troops. They seem to be shunned by the Belgians, treated with little respect by the Press, and unpopular with the Katanga Government which resents their presence in the country. Later during my stay I was able to judge for myself when I met Colonel Byrne, commanding the UN forces in the Katanga, and six of his senior staff officers. The Headquarters' staff consists of Irish, Swedish, Ghanaian, Ethiopian, and a Burmese Colonel who is the Chief of Staff. As I speak the language, I was able to learn quite a lot from this fine fighting soldier. (note: although this was not contained in my report, my conversation with Colonel Ye Gaung is worth recording. After lunch together we settled down with real Burmese cheroots and he told me how his Government was dealing with the rebel elements in Burma. It was cruel in the extreme as the policy was to take no prisoners whenever the opposing forces clashed. When I questioned Ye Gaung about his experiences in Africa, which were of course limited, he was at first hesitant to commit himself but then confessed that he looked on the Africans in the Congo as a bunch of primitive savages. This was how a distinguished Oriental viewed much of Africa as he had seen.

It was certainly useful having such a good contact but unfortunately this nice Burman fell ill shortly afterwards and had to be repatriated back to his country.

The Irish contingent numbers two full battalions... 1,400 men. I understand that Mr Berendsen is pressing for reinforcements and from all accounts they are badly needed. I was very impressed by the calibre of the Irish officers. Of the seven I met, five had passed Staff College. They are doing a fine job under great pressure. The period of service with U.N.O. is six months. I am sure this is long enough as it is not a pleasant job, being neither soldier nor policeman. The Moroccan troops are described as the finest soldiers in the force, and Colonel Byrne is much impressed with the behaviour and discipline of the Ghanaian contingent.

In a force such as this, morale is not easily maintained. There are for instance, wide differences in pay and service conditions. An Irish officer receives a few shillings a day, whereas Swedish officers of similar rank draw up to fourteen dollars daily. In spite of this the Headquarters staff seemed a happy group of men and very efficient.

The Katanga Army

I gather that only about five hundred of the original Force Publique remains, and the total force of about 2,500 men are mainly recruits under training. I was informed, but cannot vouch for its accuracy, that 1,000 of the new type Belgian automatic rifles have arrived. Supporting weapons include 60m mortars, machine guns, and a type of Bazooka.

There are Belgian officers and N.C.O.'s many of whom are newly recruited.

General

Although supplies in Elisabethville appear to be plentiful, I understand that the Government is concerned about future supplies of maize. This is normally purchased from the Kasai Province, perhaps the most disturbed area today.

A visit to the airfield revealed that planes for internal services, previously marked "Sabena" are now freshly painted "Air Katanga". Whether there has been a change in ownership is not know."

In a covering letter to this report I wrote:

"I must confess that I came away from the Katanga on this occasion with a feeling of disquiet and apprehension about its future; even more so than when in June I predicted that the key to political power at that time rested with the Force Publique. This time the undercurrents centre round the future role of the United Nations, and whether, even if its military strength is doubled, it can hold the tribal influences in check and to continue to function in a territory where it is clearly unwelcome. I would not be at all surprised to see the European military contingents withdrawn and replaced by those of independent African States or from India. I hope I am wrong, but things are far from happy in that direction."

In writing the above I was voicing fears already in my mind that the UN had either to persuade the Katangese Provincial Government to support the Central Government through negotiation or by coercion compel it to participate. At the time, the entire activities of the troops under Colonel Byrne's command, was confined to moving men all over the Province to

quell tribal disturbances which could have been performed much more effectively by Tshombe's own people, if he had at his disposal the men to carry out his orders. The UN was taking only small bites at the cherry although they were doing their best, but they lacked the type of Intelligence that would have been at the disposal of an indigenous force. Moreover, the Irish soldiers were in the main simple country youths quite unversed in jungle warfare. The Swedes were decorative and that is about all. Mr. Berendsen must have realised this and I am sure that his request for reinforcements would add the proviso that they should be black. It was obvious for all to see that Tshombe, with all the speed he could muster, and with the wealth of the copper royalties behind him, was out to demonstrate to all concerned that the Katanga was independent and intended to remain that way. He was building up his force of Mercenaries who in later months were to play a major role in the struggle to keep order in the country and to fight for its independence. They were a mixed lot of tough men out to earn good money by fighting. But their behaviour in Elisabethville was exemplary and I got to know quite a few of them. They were a friendly lot consisting of English, French, German, South Africans and a few Rhodesians. In Elisabethville it was funny to watch them. They had a favourite bar they used to fill and if a party of Swedes came near the latter would cross the road to avoid the bar.

The rift between the Belgian civilian population and men of the United Nations continued to grow. For some reason this applied particularly to the Swedes who were hated. The Moroccan, Tunisian, and Ghanians were more respected as they kept to themselves and were rarely seen in the streets. On the other hand the Swedes were everywhere flaunting their dollar bills in the shops.

The whole atmosphere of Elisabethville was changing for the worse. It had become shoddy. And there appeared to be general air of despondency. The Africans themselves were no longer bright and cheery as they used to be. After Independency was declared it was quite a common sight to see the men, escorting their wives or girlfriends, gathered in groups at the best hotels drinking beer. But everyone was happy and it didn't matter a hoot if a mother, squatting on the floor of the bar, breast fed her baby. It was taken in good part by the Europeans. But I think it was a temporary feature of independence. In the best hotels one had to pay for the privilege of being a customer and the Africans soon found that the novelty wore off and were more content to drink in their own beer halls.

On 12th October, following another visit to the Katanga I wrote as follows:

“Quite apart from Mining and the tempo of Union Miniere’s production programme, there are indications that business generally is showing signs of recovery, with increasing confidence on the part of the business community that Tshombe’s Government will be recognised. These were also the impressions gained by a French speaking London Stockbroker who attended a Rotary Luncheon at Elisabethville yesterday. He was amazed at the confidence of the local businessmen present, particularly so as he had spent the entire morning in the Operations room of the United Nations, and, as an ex officer of the Irish Guards, made an appraisal of the gigantic task facing the U.N.O. Command.

It is as if the Belgian civilian is still blind to the threat of tribal explosions and the ferment which is spreading from one end of the Katanga to the other. A further indication of this growing confidence is the changed attitude of the shopkeepers. Three weeks ago it was possible, by hard bargaining, to get an exchange rate of 200 francs on purchases with sterling currency. 180 was more or less the standard rate. Today the rate is 140, at the most 150, if the purchases amount to a sizable sum.

The Growing Tribal Tension

From Pweto on the Rhodesian border, to Manono and Kabalo, Kabongo and Kaniama, Baudouinville and Albertville, come disturbing reports of increasing tension. The Tin Mine at Manono ceased production a few days ago, and this is now one of the worst trouble spots in the Katanga. It extends from Manono and follows the valley of the Lualaba River down to Kukama, skirting the Parc National de Upemba. This is a Baluba stronghold and violently anti Tshombe. United Nations patrols operating in this area, and also in the drainage of the Lufira, report their movements hampered by the burning of ferries. It must be borne in mind that these patrols consist of but two officers and a handful of men. The main task of the U.N. forces seems to be to hold all airfields. This, together with the patrols, is the extent to which the UN can function with its limited numbers. Meanwhile, the Balubas are massing and must surely, with volcanic force, eventually erupt into the political scene.

Almost daily, Tshombe demands the right to fly in his Gendarmerie to the troubled areas, but U.N. instructions are to deny him this facility. On every occasion when the Gendarmerie has been in contact with the Baluba there has been a massacre, and the most ghastly atrocities are reported by UN observers. The most recent of these was at Vumba near Kabalo on the line of rail. It was indeed a massacre of tribesmen, followed by the most primitive acts of savagery. In this area exists one of the most potent ingredients for future trouble. It appears that in July the Belgians

despatched an ammunition train from Albertville, its destination being Kamina. It was derailed near Kabalo, and a relief train suffered then same fate. A small U.N.O. force is endeavouring to see that this whole train load of modern arms and ammunitions does not fall into the wrong hands. The Balubas are well aware of the nature and contents of this train, and its present location is far from satisfactory and considered by U.N.O. to be highly explosive. This is a statement of fact and reported only to reinforce my own expressed views regarding the Katanga situation as a whole.

Unemployment

UN Headquarters is becoming increasingly alarmed at the rising rate of unemployment throughout the Katanga. The closing of the Manono Mine is viewed seriously, as this was already a disturbed area.

Unemployment, the incidence of disease, malnutrition and possible famine, this is the Katanga picture viewed beyond the limited frontiers of Tshombe's realm of governmental control. In contrast is the Elisabethville scene, where, apart from the marked absence of European women, life goes on as before."

This was the scene in the Katanga as I saw it in the closing months of 1960. The United Nations was doing its best to cope with all such matters as concerned it whilst Tshombe continued to consolidate his position as President of the breakaway Province. The political battle for power in the Congo was being fought in Leopoldville. In the following year the repercussions of this struggle were to reverberate throughout the Katanga.

My guess that the Irish would be replaced by African or Indian troops proved to be correct although another small Irish contingent was being despatched to replace the original force. Colonel Harry Byrne's men were not sorry to leave. They had worked under great pressure from the very beginning and had suffered the tragedy of losing all but one man of a small patrol. It is a terribly sad story but must be told to describe the primitive savagery of the Congo, a country supposed to be fit and competent to govern itself.

The patrol in question consisting of two young officers and about a dozen men were forced to halt their vehicles at a broken down bridge spanning a stream they had to cross to reach their objective. The country was thickly wooded giving good cover for an ambush and from the evidence that came out later it was clear that this had been previously planned. Whilst the patrol, which it would appear had failed to take the precaution of posting sentries whilst the repairs were being done, were busy making

good the bridge the Balubas with their bows and arrows were converging silently through the trees to get within range. It must have been quite a large mob. At a given moment the deadly arrows were loosed off and the Irishmen mowed down to a man. According to medical evidence each man in turn was bludgeoned to death, their faces unrecognisable. This done the most frightful mutilations followed. Where the eyes had been the men's testicles were inserted and their penis's cut off and used to fill the mouths. It was in this frightful terrifying manner that the bodies were found. There was one survivor, a young private and although wounded with three arrows in his buttocks, managed to crawl away to a hiding place amongst the trees. Later he was rescued and the barbed arrows skilfully removed by a Tunisian surgeon. Harry Byrne brought him out personally in a helicopter and later told me the full details of this ghastly story.

By the time the New Year of 1961 dawned, Lumumba had fallen foul of President Kasavubu who in June 1960 I had predicted was a man to be reckoned with in Congo politics. In Leopoldville the situation was confused with a constant jockeying for power amongst the leaders aided and abetted by the outside influence of certain members of the United Nations who were definitely meddling in political affairs. In November of the previous year Kasavubu had engineered the downfall and arrest of Lumumba who, badly beaten up had been imprisoned at Thysville, the ill fated camp where the Force Publique had mutinies. Now, in 1961 there was a loud clamour from the African states, Ghana, Guinea, United Arab Republic etc for his release and restoration to the Premiership and at the time this was said to have the backing of the United Nations who were bending over backwards to placate the Afro-Asian bloc. Fearful that this might happen, Kasavubu, and his General, Mobutu, decided that the only course open to them (realising as they did that if Lumumba was returned to power it would be tantamount to digging their own graves), was to dispose of the man for good and all. It is believed on good authority that Tshombe was approached but no doubt on the advice of his Belgian advisors he refused to have anything to do with the plot in the Katanga. The next approach is said to have been made to Albert Kalonji, a Baluba leader in the Kasai who hated Lumumba perhaps even more so than Tshombe. All that is known thereafter comes from the pilot who claims that he was ordered to fly three prisoners from Leopoldville to Bakwanga, Kalonji's stronghold, but on arrival there found the airport unserviceable. He was then instructed to continue on to Elisabethville. During the flight the Army guards created such a commotion in the plane whilst battering the prisoners that the pilot feared he might crash but eventually this cargo of three near dead prisoners arrived completely unknown to

Tshombe and his Ministers. Lumumba's companions were Joseph Okito and Maurice Mpolo, the former having been Deputy Speaker and the latter a Minister in the Lumumba Government.

From this point onwards it is only possible to speculate as to what actually happened. At the time the Katangese Government claimed that the men were first taken to a villa on the outskirts of the town and later transferred to a remote farmhouse from which, (so the story runs) they effected their escape only to be killed by villagers. It is all a pack of lies of course and the truth will never be known. But what we do know is that the Government refused United Nations insistence to see the prisoners and their graves were never discovered. Later, the UN held an enquiry which of course implicated Tshombe and Munongo and two Belgian Mercenaries named as Colonel Huyghe and Captain Gat.

I can add little to this mystery beyond saying that a Belgian doctor acquaintance of mine claimed that all three prisoners died not long after their arrival. They got no further than the villa on the outskirts of Elisabethville where Lumumba was already dying from the injuries he had received at Thysville and in the plane. To put him out of his misery and to save further unnecessary bludgeoning to death one of the Mercenaries shot him and as the other men had witnessed the deed they were promptly executed and all three bodies disposed of in the Mine furnaces.

What manner of man was this Lumumba? I am prompted to ask this question as a result of a remark made to me by Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia long before the breakup of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. At a time when it was certainly not done in Rhodesia to entertain black men in your houses, I dined in company with Kaunda at that time a political leader commanding considerable respect for his apparent sincerity and desire to see "freedom" achieved by constitutional means. I will be honest and admit that I was impressed by him but even then suspected that his Messialike approach to politics might prove dangerous when he reached power, and this I was certain he would achieve in due course. What I couldn't reconcile with his thinking was his worship of Nkrumah and the late Lumumba both of who were rogues and racialists in my view. Somehow it didn't add up with a man who purported to nail to his political mast a burning desire to uplift the poor and uneducated, to see white men and black living in harmony under the rule of law. (Yes, I have since been disillusioned). However, as the time came to end the small dinner party, and we were about to go home, my wife asked Kaunda a question. "Why" she said, "do you venerate the memory of the late Lumumba so much"? As usual in his conversation Kaunda picked his words carefully before replying. "Because" he said

“Lumumba represented the spirit of African freedom and died because of his beliefs”.

To me this is utter nonsense for Lumumba's record is an unsavoury one not only in politics but also in the days before his name gained prominence in the Congo. Unlike Tshombe who came from a long line of tribal chiefs Lumumba was of humble birth. He belonged to the Batetela tribe which inhabits the northern part of Kasai Province. Educated first at a Catholic school and then at a Protestant one which ended at the primary stage, he already showed leanings towards furthering his own ends at the expense of others. Having first stolen from the mission he obtained work at a Post Office in Stanleyville where his public career began. He became a Union leader and prospered until the Belgian authorities caught him on a charge of embezzlement and he was sentenced to two years imprisonment. To give the man his due he studied hard and had the gift of oratory but he was a fanatical racist and from all accounts unbalanced. And so in politics this Trade Union leader flourished to such an extent that in 1958 he was demanding the independence of the Congo from this Belgians. By then he had fallen under the influence of Nkrumah who became the financial backer of Lumumba's Party of the “Movement National Congolais.” Everything points to the man's Communist leanings. He wished to abolish tribalism in favour of a unitary form of Government. His ideas tended towards dictatorship and following this course proved to be his downfall. His days in power were numbered mainly because of frequent quarrels with his colleagues if he could be said to have any close enough to him to warrant the name colleague apart from his lieutenant Antoine Gizenga, a sworn and dangerous Communist.

The death of Lumumba sparked off another round of senseless killings throughout the Congo. Tribalism again reared its ugly head and the United Nations seemed powerless to halt the massacres that took place amongst the whites as well as the blacks. A reign of chaos and bloodshed had begun.

By now it had become clear to me that the direction of U.N.O. from New York was to destroy Tshombe and his Government and to strip him of all his Belgian advisors and officers. This view was confirmed in February when under Communist and Afro-Asian pressure the Security Council accepted a resolution calling for the withdrawal from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign political, economic and military advisors as well as mercenaries. That this was a political decision aimed at the Katanga leaves little room for doubt. Yet, of all the Provinces, the Katanga was the most peaceful and at least had a sound government which was being well advised. Copper production at the UMHK mines continued without

interruption and there were no tribal clashes. It went to prove that if workers are well paid and there is no unemployment their jobs come before strife. Here it is important to note that the highest paid Africans employed on the mines were Balubas. The policy of African advancement was beginning to pay dividends. Following the uprising and mutiny of the Force Publique the previous year the Belgians lost about 20% of their European labour force and these were gradually replaced by skilled Africans. They were paid the same rates as their European counterparts without of course the expatriation allowances. They enjoyed the same standard of houses as the whites and the artisans clubs were open to them. All seemed set fair for multi racial harmony until the United Nations decreed otherwise.

It had been an act of sheer folly for the Security Council to agree the February resolution demanding the withdrawal of the Belgian advisors at such a time. The country needed them badly and, as I knew from personal experience, they were dedicated men with wide knowledge of Congolese affairs. But as it happened Tshombe took no notice of the demand and the Belgians remained. Moreover, the United Nations representatives at Elisabethville seemed to close a blind eye to what was going on for none of the Belgians were forced to leave.

From my own experiences in the Katanga and from all I heard in the early months of 1961 I really believe that the United Nations, at least as represented in Elisabethville, did its best, admittedly a poor best, to fulfil the role for which it was intended. But stemming from the Security Council Resolution of 21st February, (which incidentally included the use of force, if necessary, in the last resort) a change was noticeable in the attitude of the World Body. In other words the dangerous "Congo Club" in New York now had the bit between its teeth and was determined to have the Congo "governed" in such a manner as suited its biased purpose. Biased indeed it was as well as dangerous. What we were witnessing was the attempts by a bunch of heterogeneous amateurs to force their will on one of the most primitive parts of Africa. Those of us who know something of the black continent are convinced that in their own way if left to their own devices the Congolese would have settled their differences. Of course there would have been bloodshed but the UN's futile attempts to impose its will also resulted in bloodshed and disaster. History will record that Tshombe played his part in trying to bring together the African leaders so that they could reach a settlement. In February he suggested that they meet in Geneva but eventually the Conference was held at Tananarive, the capital of Malagasy. A form of loose Federation was agreed upon by all who attended but one conspicuous absentee was the Communist Gizenga. This power hungry fanatic of the Nkrumah

school could not be associated with a peaceful settlement so he stayed away.

It was cheerful Tshombe who returned from this Conference although he knew quite well the price he would have to pay to retain his independence. There were financial strings attached to the agreements reached and this could only mean that he would have to share with the other Provinces the riches of the Katanga. This he was prepared to do.

In order to hammer out still further the issues at stake another meeting of leaders was arranged for April, this time at Coquilhatville, but it is obvious from what happened there that Kasavubu and his colleagues from Leopoldville had been “got at” in the meantime for they repudiated the agreements reached at Malagasy and when Tshombe was about to leave he was arrested at the airport together with the other members of his delegation. The unfortunate Tshombe was confined in a small room and subjected to a form of torture in the shape of an ever burning electric light bulb.

The news came as a shock to those of us who believed that at last some headway was being made to break the political deadlock. Opinions differed amongst well informed Belgians as to whether it was United Nations interference which had resulted in Kasavubu’s “volte face” or whether the pressure was being put on by the United States who from all accounts from New York were backing the Afro-Asians in their demand that there should be a unified Congo. Personally, I think that both the “Congo Club” and America were to blame. After all, the richest copper mining area in the world was at stake and as I have previously said, but for those great riches the Katanga would not have become the focal point for United Nations and American policies.

To those of us with suspicious minds and distrust of what was going on in New York we saw behind the arrest of Tshombe a sinister motive. We believed that it was hoped that Munongo would seize the opportunity to come to terms with the UN and to replace Tshombe as President of the Katanga. He certainly had the opportunity. The door was wide open when Tshombe was charged with treason. From my own informed sources at Elisabethville I knew that the UN officials there were confident that the Tshombe regime would collapse a view shared by many close observers of the political scene.

The strong man Munongo did no such thing. He not only remained absolutely loyal to his leader but enhanced his image by having printed tens of thousands of pictures of Tshombe inscribed, “he suffers for us ... let us be worthy of him”. These were displayed throughout the Katanga.

They plastered the walls of buildings and occupied prominent places in all the shops. The people prayed for Tschombe's release and there was a great public outcry.

Typical of the United Nations they made no attempt to obtain Tshombe's release or on humanitarian grounds at least, saw that his imprisonment should be on civilised lines. Not a finger did they lift, (nor did they intervene in Algeria this year where until he died the unfortunate Tshombe was held for two years on no grounds whatsoever).

But on June 22nd Tshombe was set free after agreeing under duress to certain terms beneficial to the Leopoldville Government. The hero returned to Elisabethville but a very sick man.

If June was in one sense a happy month for the Katangese it was, in another sense, a disaster. June 14th had seen the arrival at Elisabethville of that extraordinary character Dr Connor Cruise O'Brien who had been specially selected by the Secretary General of the United Nations as his Representative in Katanga. If ever a man was less suited to a position of great power it was this good looking Irish intellectual. The Security Council's Resolution of February 21st was his bible and he had come to see it implemented with an International force at his command. He was to prove a disaster in every sense of the word. The man revelled in power and the task he had been set, and he could hardly wait to unleash the might of his armour against the slender forces of the Katanga. His dislike of the Belgians was intense and only matched by his loathing of everything British, its past imperialism and its present Conservative Government. In short he was a dangerous Irishman as becomes revealed as then tragedy of the Katanga unfolds.

Shortly after O'Brien's arrival I had occasion to visit Elisabethville again. The main topic then was the arrival of Ghurkha and Dogra troops from India and there was speculation as to how soon O'Brien would move them into the capital to spearhead his attack on Tshombe's inadequate forces.

By this time it was common gossip that the United Nations would use force in order to end the secession of the Katanga although Tshombe had made it clear that he was prepared to share the spoils of his income from UMHK. If ever there was a chance to end the political deadlock now was the time. The ball was clearly in the hands of the UN but informed observers saw no indication on their part to enter into negotiations with the Katanga President. It was war!

On 17th July 1961 I reported as follows:

"Feeling against the United Nations is even stronger than ever. They have 11,000 troops in the Katanga out of a total Congo strength of less than 15,000. Their somewhat belligerent behaviour recently is that of an occupying force and it is generally believed that a "showdown" is imminent. What form this will take remains to be seen but the atmosphere is unhealthy to say the least. Well informed opinion is that the UN itself is rocking and that pressures are being exerted to achieve something positive before the all important September meeting in New York of the Security Council when Mr Hammarskjold will have to give an account of his stewardship in the Congo. It is even possible that if nothing has been achieved, and little has, the UN troops may be withdrawn. This of course is exactly what Russia would like and in any case, where is the money coming from to continue such a gigantic and extravagant operation, financed almost entirely by the United States and to a lesser extent, Britain.

Dealing with Katanga/Rhodesia relations I wrote:

"The United National Independence Party (UNIP) has no support or following in the Katanga and Kenneth Kaunda as a political leader is discounted. On the other hand Katilungo (whose tragic death in a road accident was a grievous loss to the country), had the support of several members of Tshombe's Cabinet, particularly that of Munongo, Minister of the Interior. Whilst this is true, my own opinion is that the Katanga African has enough trouble on his plate already without bothering too much at this stage with the aspirations of Rhodesian Africans towards independence."

O'Brien lost little time in carrying out his orders and his first move was to strip Tshombe of his advisors and to attempt to rid the country of the foreign Mercenaries. His target date was of course September and his plans laid accordingly. He knew perfectly well that to achieve his ends he would have to use force and that blood would most likely flow. He confesses this in his book, "To Katanga and Back" for in chapter three, describing his journey from New York to Elisabethville to take up his appointment he travelled via Brussels where he met and dined with Mr Sahbani the taciturn Tunisian who was Mr Hammarskjold's unofficial "Ambassador" to the Belgian Government. I quote:

"I had long realised, intellectually, the dangers ahead but it was only in the Hotel Metropole as I listened to the husky voice of Mr Sahbani that I had, for the first time, any emotional intuition of what this meant; the first faint smell of violence and death. The ormolu clock on the great mantelpiece struck, and it was time to leave for Elisabethville."

Now O'Brien knew all about the killings in the Congo, the tribal clashes and the slaughter of innocent Europeans. All this he must have learned in New York or read in the newspapers. It was front page news at the time. One can only conclude that his first faint smell of violence and death meant something quite different; that it had taken on a new concept. It certainly leaves one wondering what the Tunisian told him to stir his emotions. Perhaps it whetted his appetite and stimulated his burning desire to transform his intellectual theories into practice.

To rid the Katanga of its Belgian advisors and the Mercenaries was easier said than done. To begin with Tshombe agreed that certain of his Belgians could be released and some went of their own accord having seen the writing on the wall. But O'Brien was becoming impatient and began to use force. There were ugly scenes as armed Swedish troops swooped on the houses of those who had not left. Some Belgians were arrested and forcibly deported. Tension developed and there was a great outcry as the people, both black and white, saw the United Nations in their true colours. One particularly ugly scene occurred when the Swedes went to arrest one of Tshombe's key advisors, an elderly Belgian by the name of Thyssens. Their dog, unused to acts of violence in the house, snapped at one of the "blue berets" and the man without hesitation drew his pistol and shot the pet dog dead in front of the Thyssen family. They were then bundled into an army car and put aboard a Brussels bound plane without even a chance to pack their belongings or say goodbye to their friends. Altogether it was a despicable exhibition of the use of force amongst civilians and one that will long be remembered.

It was quite a different matter dealing with the Mercenaries. True, some did leave the Katanga but many others either went into hiding with their men confident that it would take more than the United Nations to flush them out. To the very end they remained a thorn in the flesh of the would-be masters and often performed mercy operations to save the lives of European missionaries whose safety the United Nations ignored.

Not content with his mopping-up operations O'Brien looked in every direction to find enemies to the cause to which he had become dedicated. He accused the British Government of bad faith over their Congo policy and more than once did his utmost to drag Rhodesia into the Katanga turmoil. The Federal Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, was his principle target. He saw Welensky a sabre rattling politician who was secretly arming Tshombe and supporting him in every way. He went so far as to say that Federal troops had been infiltrated over the border. All this was of course utter nonsense as I well knew. It is true that Sir Roy was fighting the British Government tooth and nail over the Katanga issue, and his

sympathies lay with Tshombe. That he resented the actions of the United Nations in the Katanga is also well known but then he had his own man on the spot and knew every move made there. How could he help but loathe all that was going on in a neighbouring country. The very security of the Federation, (or at least Northern Rhodesia) was at stake. But the Federation's foreign policy was controlled from Whitehall which in turn followed the American attitude towards a unified Congo. The evil "Club" in New York was American dominated and there is simply no doubt about the fact that the Americans wished to see the Tshombe regime toppled and to this end were prepared to see force used. Here I will repeat that but for the wealth of the Katanga none of this would have happened. But what defeats me to this day is how America continued to use and give backing to those whose sympathies were extreme leftish to say the least. This from a country fighting communism. My Belgian friends were convinced that both O'Brien and his Deputy, Tombelaine, were neo communists. They were certainly all out to destroy capitalism in the Katanga no matter what the cost in lives. Personally, I think of these men as starry eyed intellectuals lacking the balance to hold positions of authority.

It was a trying time for the Consular Corps who continued to function at Elisabethville under great strain. With the exception of the American Consul all were considered suspect and pro Tshombe by O'Brien and of course anti United Nations. As for the latter, I am sure they were for the men of UN as seen in the Katanga, were loathed by all.

It was certainly no sinecure being a consul in those days. The Italian Consul had been murdered in the 1960 "troubles" and Elisabethville was all too gun happy.

Up to this point the war between Tshombe and the United Nations had not really come out into the open. They had skirmished, growled, and then sulked but there had been little public display of actual hostility. But on August 28th this attitude changed. At 11.15 hours on that day I received the following message from the acting Director General of UMHK:

"UN Forces have occupied Elisabethville with a view to displacing all remaining European Officers and Technicians from the Katanga Government and Army. They have occupied the Radio Station, Post Office, and other Civil Services. Normal internal telephonic communications for the time being are suspended. We are informed that the UN has set up road blocks on roads leading to Elisabethville and intending visitors are advised not to travel."

Within minutes I had flashed this message to Salisbury and Johannesburg and as I now had the added responsibility of keeping the Senior Provincial Commissioner at Ndola informed I passed on the message to him by telephone. "Could I check whether the British Consulate had been occupied" came his answer and within half an hour I was able to assure him that this was not the case and that all was quiet at Elisabethville. But rumours were rife and I was kept busy answering numerous queries.

Later in the day I received more details of the United Nations actions. Apparently O'Brien had issued an ultimatum to all Europeans in the armed services to give themselves up by the 30th or suffer the consequences. Consulates were ordered to surrender any of their nationals who had sought refuge with them. There had been some ugly scenes as UN armed troops had made their dawn sweep through the town. The airfield had been occupied. The rounding up operation had not been confined to the capital. UN troops had stormed into the other centres arresting people right and left. By now O'Brien had under his command the Indian contingent under Brigadier Raja. The Indians had been allowed in under protest from Tshombe. At first they had been stationed at Kamina but now that O'Brien's plans were in the open and September was drawing near, the Irishman had abandoned all attempts to hide his intentions. He no longer threatened but had resorted to force. That he was even prepared to go to the extent of lying to substantiate his case against the Tshombe regime is illustrated by the affair in which a 36 year old Belgian, Andre Cremer was involved.

Cremer was one of the Belgians caught in the dawn swoop. He immediately asked to be placed under UN protection claiming that his life was in danger. According to his story he had been hired by Munongo to assassinate O'Brien and other UN officials. Without bothering to check this man's story O'Brien gave it prominence in a Press conference and then stated that he would break off relations with the Katanga Government unless Tshombe dismissed Munongo from his office as Minister of the Interior. Tshombe refused.

It didn't take the Belgian police long to identify this man Cremer as he had a criminal record and was on the run having been sentenced to three years in jail. He had also been dismissed from the Katanga army.

Yet in spite of this damning evidence O'Brien used the story to discredit the Government in the same way as later he was to use the Balubas for his own ends. Cremer would only survive for a few weeks. He was shot dead by UN troops when trying to escape from a prison camp.

O'Brien's next move was to fly in Ghurkha troops to reinforce his Dogra brigade. Elisabethville was now bursting at the seams with "blue berets" all concentrating on the city when the real job to be done lay in the troubled districts. But the United Nations had only one aim.... the destruction by force of Tshombe's government.

Whilst all this was going on I received a visit from one of my best Belgian contacts, a timer contractor from Albertville. I quote his story in order to illustrate the manner in which orders by the United Nations were bringing chaos to the country. This is what my Belgian friend had to say:

"I was in Albertville this week and it was like a dead town. The fishing industry is at a standstill as the fish cannot move away. Similarly, the timber industry has closed down all work. This has resulted in unemployment and the people are hungry and restive. There are some Indian troops of the United Nations to be seen but all they have done is to remove all the Belgian officers from the Katanga Army which is now officered by Africans. They have not clashed with the UN.

Whilst in the town I was fortunate enough to meet and have lunch with the senior officer. Captain Jean Pierre Otakomba, who was promoted to the rank on 1st August after 12 years service in the Katanga. Over our meal he informed me that he had pleaded with the United Nations to leave at least a small quota of European officers in charge but his views had been utterly disregarded. Captain Otakomba went on to say that although his men remained reasonably well disciplined there are insufficient of the right calibre to maintain this for any length of time. Coming from an African this was a very fair summing up of the situation which could become explosive."

In reply to my questioning this well informed Belgian said that what the African officer had told him was going on throughout the length and breadth of the land. There was bound to be trouble amongst the black troops and it was utter lunacy to place Africans in charge who only days before had been N.C.O.'s. Otakomba was a fine honest type who knew his limitations. Albertville was lucky to have such a man in charge.

Reports continued to come in from Elisabethville where Tshombe had made concessions to the United Nations who had withdrawn from the strategic positions they had occupied on 28th August. But it was an uneasy calm that prevailed. Divorced from his advisors Tshombe had become hesitant and unsure of himself. But not so Kimba and the strong man Munongo. This was brought home to me by a meeting I had with two French Mercenary officers who were in hiding with their men in the thick bush not far from our border.

Word reached me through a Belgian contact that these men wished to talk to me. How they knew of my existence I never discovered and it is of no consequence. However, being an old hand at this game I was determined not to become personally involved so I got in touch with a Security Officer who I knew had the ear of Sir Roy Welensky. He agreed to come with me and on September 9th we set off for our secret meeting in the bush. Together we drew up a report on our conversation with these two French officers and I have no doubt that a copy reached the Federal Prime Minister. I quote the relevant parts of the report as they shed light on the attitude of certain Ministers at that time and underline the delicate position in which the Federation found itself.

This is what the Frenchmen had to say:

“There are between 100-150 of us in this area who have managed to evade the expulsion order of the United Nations. We have been sent to this place for a rest having been hunted by the UN for the past week. We propose to enter Elisabethville this evening after dark to report our conversation with you to the Katanga Cabinet and we will return on Monday evening. We have come to see you and to seek your support, and we come with the blessing of Mr Kimba the Foreign Minister, Mr Munongu, the Minister of the Interior, and Mr Wenda, who was until recently the Katanga Representative in Brussels. Mr Tshombe knows that we are here to talk to you but now, deprived of his Advisors, he is hesitant to support his colleagues in the Cabinet who demand positive action against the United Nations.

The real purpose of our visit, apart from getting aid from our Rhodesian friends, is to acquaint the Federal Government with the intention of the Katanga Government to establish over its borders a series of Commando training units which unknown to the UN will train in the Pedicle. The first of these units comprising four to six European Officers and some 60 selected Africans will be based in the bush near to Kasumbalasa (which was nearby our meeting place). The object of these Commando units is to embarrass the UN by a form of guerrilla warfare, and, if necessary, sabotage, should Central Government forces invade the Katanga under the protection of the United Nations. Unfortunately, although the Katanga army is quite well equipped apart from sten-guns, the necessary tools of the Commandoes are lacking.

We are not in the least concerned about the United Nations as a Military force. The Katanga army holds 12,000 men plus a Police force of some 2000. Of the Katanga indigenous population of 1,600,000 people all but 450,000 Balubas are solidly behind Mr Tshombe. The early trouble is

likely to emanate from the 25,000 Balubas who are under the protection of the UN. It is our opinion that the UN has inspired this headlong rush of Balubas with stories of fear and reprisals by the Katangese. Conditions at the UN refugee camp are appalling and doctors fear that serious epidemics may result from the lack of proper sanitary arrangements at the camp. We believe that trouble may break out tonight. The situation is very tense.

We are quite sure that if the UN leaves the Katanga there will be no threat of invasion by Central Government forces.

Mr Gizenga has under his command about 11,000 troops a large part of which are centred at Kindu. They have 15 European officers headed by a Frenchman, Lt. Colonel Boilleau, who is a well known Communist.

There is not a single UN soldier in the troubled Province of Kasai. The concentration is in the Katanga. Mr Tshombe is sorely in need of assistance and the situation is deteriorating daily. Yet the UN closed a blind eye to Mr Gizenga's communist mercenaries. There has been no question of evicting them as the UN has us.

We shall be back in our retreat on Monday night. We hope that you will be able to give us some message of encouragement. It is our intention to stay and fight."

Here indeed was food for thought for the Security man I had taken with me to meet the fugitives. Both were Frenchmen of considerable culture and background. They were not just tough mercenaries but highly trained military officers dedicated to the cause for which they had volunteered. The senior, had fought with our 8th Army in the desert and later in Algeria as had his companion. It was my guess that because of their activities in Algeria they could never return to France. Sad, for they were both young and debonair in appearance.

Having had some experience of working behind enemy lines I questioned them on the sort of guerrilla tactics they had in mind using when the time came. "Oh" came the laconic answer to my question; "our men will sleep all day and strike terror into the hearts of the enemy⁷ at night. Then we shall slip quietly away into the bush." Asked for their opinion as to the fighting qualities of the Africans they had hidden in the bush, they replied that the men were ideal material for guerrilla training provided always that they had a European to lead them. Captain "X", the senior, explained his men were very handpicked. All were Lundas of Tshombe's tribe and they had already learned how to infiltrate into Elisabethville at night. He personally thought nothing of visiting the town after dark. No, he was not

the least bit scared of the UN although admitting that as fighting soldiers the Indians stood head and shoulders above the others,. He thought the Swedes were a joke.

Our meeting ended, John, (the Security man) and I made our way back to Kitwe discussing the Frenchmen and the reason for their mission as we drove along the well trodden route I had come to know so well. We agreed that undoubtedly they had been sent as emissaries of the Katanga Government. They obviously enjoyed the trust and confidence of Munongu and Kimba as well as Tshombe himself. That they were well informed there was not a shadow of a doubt and it was quite clear in my mind that they were trying to enlist the help of Sir Roy in Salisbury. However, it was none of my business. The contact had been made and I was free to drop out of the picture apart from giving a copy of the record of the meeting to "Our Man in the Katanga". This is a story in itself.

Some weeks previously my secretary had announced that a gentleman from London wished to see me and I had told her to show him in. My job was such that I often had unexpected visitors was this was no exception.

I greeted my visitor who turned out to be a youngish looking forty year old who was a little difficult to place. He carried himself with an air of confidence and authority and for a moment I thought he might prove to be a Foreign Correspondent for a British newspaper.

Introductions completed my visitor lost no time in coming to the point. "I am not going to beat about the bush" he said with a slight smile, "Dick told me to look you up as he knew you would be able to help me in my new assignment which is the Katanga". He had no need to say any more for the message had come through loud and clear. Dick was none other than the head of MI6 for whom I had worked for some years both during the war and after. We had been good friends and I had watched with great interest his amazing rise to fame. But only once since I left the service had we met and this had been a social occasion some years previously. I suppose at the time I must have talked about my job but we had certainly not discussed his role with the Foreign Office. Then on reflection it occurred to me that he had perhaps read a recent article of mine in the English Financial Times and having a card index mind had remembered me when briefing his man for the Katanga.

There is no doubt about it. Once bitten with the Intelligence bug it is hard to shake off. For years I had cut off all links with the organisation although from time to time I had met some of my former colleagues by chance. Undoubtedly a strong bond existed between those still serving and those who had entered other fields to earn a living.

I had already taken a liking to this man from the FO. He had a most pleasant personality and with the ice broken he was able to tell me what he had in mind doing. He had certainly been well briefed. He knew of my friendships in Elisabethville and the fact that apart from running my own private intelligence service I also had communication links with the Katanga which were being used in cases of emergency by the British Consul. We discussed this and recent events there until it was time to go to my house for lunch. "X" as I shall call him, was to make my house his Rhodesian base on his frequent visits to and from the Katanga. Once our relationship was established I never attempted to enquire about his business but I always kept him informed of matters which came to me through my Belgian contacts and he was able to use some of my friends who had their finger on the pulse of matters affecting the Katanga.

Chapter 3

The situation in Elisabethville was indeed grave as all my reports indicated. Munongu and Kimba were pressing Tshombe to take positive action against the United Nations and it says much for the Katangese leader that he was able to restrain them.

By now the gauntlet had been thrown down and the war of words was nearing its end. The September meeting of the Security Council was drawing near and I knew that O'Brien would have to act before that date. As it happened I timed it to a minute. This was not difficult as the UN direction was so amateurish that any intelligent observer present at Elisabethville on September 12th would have had his attention drawn to the fact that not a single UN soldier was to be seen in the streets. Obviously they were confined to barracks which pointed to an operation planned for the night. So sure was I of this that after lunch on the 12th I decided to travel that evening to Elisabethville.

The time had come to see for myself what was going on for quite apart from my natural curiosity was the fact that I was responsible to my directors for a very large capital investment in the Katanga. During the day somewhat disturbing reports had been coming through from Jadotville

indicating that a force of Irish troops looked like being trapped there by Tshombe's army. Not that a situation like this would deter a man like O'Brien, (himself an Irishman), for a General Carl van Horn has said in his book: logic, military principles, even common sense, take second place to political factors when it comes to UN reasoning.

Having agreed my visit with the Belgians I left by car about four o'clock having arranged to meet my friends in the evening at the Circle Albert the exclusive Belgian club in the centre of the town. Here we should be assured of privacy and be well away from the dozen of newspaper reporters who I guessed would be filling the bar of the Premier Hotel, the Leopold II.

As I travelled at great speed over the road I had a sense of foreboding that before the night was out I would become involved in events over which I had no control. The mood had been on me all day. As I had to be back the next morning I carried only a brief case containing a clean shirt, my razor and toothbrush. This and my thoughts were enough and the journey passed quickly.

At the club my two friends, Phillip and Robert were waiting for me. We had the place to ourselves and over a drink they reinforced my opinion that the UN would attack that night. We even agreed that 04:00 hours would see the first shot fired. Elisabethville was very quiet that night and the streets were deserted as a quite a late hour we walked over to the Leopold for dinner. It was a lovely night. The rainy season had more or less ended and the balmy air carried the fresh scent of the trees for which the boulevards of the town are famous. Over our meal we pictured the scene at the "Villa des Roches" (known to the Belgians as the "Villa des Riches") which served as the official residence of the UN representative. We saw O'Brien pacing the room chain smoking his cigarettes and the motley crowd of senior officials waiting up for the attack which we knew as well as they did was timed just before dawn.

Dinner over, Phillip suggested that I might like to inspect the key points before going to bed. Earlier in the day he had driven past them and observed that new sandbags were being used in preparations made by Tshombe's men to defend the buildings in question. One look at the Central Post Office and Radio Station was enough for me to comment that the UN would penetrate them within minutes if they used Ghurkha and Dogra troops. The defences of both buildings stretched out into the road where a few sandbags provided the only protection for the unfortunate Tshombe defenders. We chatted to the men and gave them cigarettes.

They were cheerful enough but I do not think they realised what it would mean to attempt to repel men of the fighting Indian breed.

Viewing these key points that night gave me a feeling of utter helplessness for I knew the preparations would be in vain and that some of the men to whom we had chatted would shortly be dead. It all rather sickened me to think that the British Government was being so blind as to fall into line with the American opinion that the regime of Tshombe must be ended by force if necessary.

Although we drove freely about the town that night there was one direction towards which my Belgian friend would not venture. That was the road leading to the UN refugee camp. "No" said Philip firmly. "There must be upwards of 30,000 Balubas there and they are so starving that rumour has it that cannibalism is rife. Conditions are indescribable and even the UN are scared to enter the camp of their own making. Let's keep well clear of the place."

This we did and drove to the Rue Albert where accommodation had been provided for me in the UMHK guest villa. Over a nightcap Philipp and Robert told me more about the refugees. Both of these keen observers were convinced that the UN had deliberately spread alarm amongst the Balubas in fact one of them went so far as to say that the UN had brought in Swahili speaking East Africans under the guise of the "blue beret" and that these men had been going through the locations urging the tribesmen to seek sanctuary at the UN camp unless they wanted to be murdered in their sleep by Tshombe's Lundas and Munongu's Bayekes. But this was nonsense my Belgians argued. For the previous fourteen months before the United Nations began to incite them, the Balubas, under the Tshombe regime had lived in harmony with their neighbours of other tribes. They represented the pick of the mining employees and because of their superior skills had drawn good wages and lived in well appointed homes. Yet flee from them they had by the thousands to seek protection in a camp area which had no proper sanitation or food for such numbers.

Now those of us who know something of the African mentality are aware of how easily it can be roused into hysteria and panic. There was no doubt about it. Some evil influence had been at work. It certainly was none of Tshombe's doing. The last thing he wished to see was the mining of copper disrupted by labour troubles and at least in the Elisabethville area his police were in control of the tribal situation. No, there was logic in what my friends told me that in light and all they had to say coincided

with the information given to me a few days previously by the two French mercenaries near the border.

Now that I know more about O'Brien than I did at the time I would not put it beyond his clever mind to use the Balubas for his own ends. It would provide a convenient reason for UN intervention and to blacken Tshombe in the eyes of the world. But like so many clever tricks played by the UN it became unstuck as O'Brien confesses in his own words which I quote from "To Katanga and Back":

"By August 3rd there were 700 refugees in our camps; by September 1st 4,000; by September 3rd 10,000; by September 5th 20,000; by September 9th 35,000; by September 12th probably more than 45,000 but in reality we had lost count."

Little wonder that my friends would not let me go near the main camp just outside the town but even they must have under-estimated the numbers that had fled. Afterwards I was able to talk with knowledgeable people who had worked amongst the Balubas and there is no doubt in my mind that this appalling situation was the direct result of UN propaganda. The end result was complete disaster. It was inevitable that tragedies of this nature were bound to occur when the direction of affairs was in the hands of people with no knowledge of the indigenous tribesmen whom ostensibly they had come to protect. This one incident alone brings out the weakness of the World Organisation; a weakness that has been manifested wherever they have operated.

It must have been after midnight when I got to bed. I was the sole occupant of the villa that night and no servants were to be seen at that hour. But I was tired after a long day and was soon asleep. I had a meeting arranged with the Director General of Union Miniere at 7am so I needed a few hours of rest. But this was not to be. I awakened with a start to the sound of gunfire which I recognised as coming from automatic weapons. I looked at my watch. It was a few minutes after 4am. The firing came from nearby and I knew at once that the Central Post Office was being attacked as it was only a few minutes' walk from my villa. Although I knew this was going to happen it nevertheless came as something of a shock... somehow it seemed to be all wrong that the pre dawn peace should be so rudely disturbed. I was probably only half awake at the time but those were my thoughts as I dressed quietly in the bathroom with the door shut so that my light would not attract attention.

By the time I reached the road the firing had become more continuous. It was clear to me that Tshombe's men were putting up some resistance. I decided to investigate and crossing the Rue Albert I headed for a side

road which I knew would bring me out in the main square in which the Post Office was situated. Keeping under cover of hedges and the trees that lined the road I made my way cautiously towards the scene of the firing until I could go no further. My way was blocked by a Swedish armoured car. Through a gap I could see the square quite clearly and all hell seemed to be let loose there. Once again that night I felt helpless and disgusted as I stood behind a wooden gate post to give me some protection from stray bullets. I knew that the defenders had no chance against the Ghurkhas and having seen them in action in Burma I could easily visualise what was going on. I thanked God that these were not troops officered by Englishmen. My heart went out to the men behind the sandbags. They at least had some idea as to what they were fighting for. The Indian mercenaries did not.

I had the urge to get nearer to the fighting but had better sense than to expose myself to the Swedes behind their armour. Beneath my breath I cursed O'Brien and all he stood for. Oh, how I came to despise and loath the UN in those early hours of September 13th.

Quite how long I watched the scene in the square I do not recall but it must have been for nearly an hour and the fighting was still going on. Whenever there was a lull I prayed that the last shot had been fired but these spells were interrupted by other firing coming from the direction of the airport, or at least that is how it seemed to me.

It was difficult to get a clear picture of exactly what was going on. My view was partly blocked by the armoured car which was taking no part in the proceedings in fact I wondered what tactical purpose it was supposed to fulfil. However, my thoughts were rudely interrupted and I was made aware of my foolhardiness in approaching so close to the fighting. Suddenly I heard a whizzing noise as a bullet embedded itself in my protecting gate post. A ricochet had come my way and had seemed so close to my ear that instinctively I put my hand to my head expecting to find it covered in blood. My ear seemed to be burning but it was no more than my imagination. The firing had flared up again as the first streaks of dawn showed in the sky. My nostrils were full of the smell of cordite and I decided that the time had come to make my way back to the Rue Albert.

There was something so utterly false about the battle for the Post Office and it was difficult to realise that men were being killed. Seeing it as I did was more like a stage set but I think deep down inside me was a feeling that it was all unnecessary and unreal. All I remember is that I felt desperately unhappy. I longed to be active but there was nothing to be done but wait until I could get on the air to let Rhodesia know what had

happened during the night. It was in this mood that I shaved at the villa and by the time I was prepared for the day ahead it was soon after 5 o'clock. Firing was still quite intense but I was not going to expose myself again in the early light. Instead I tried to pinpoint the sporadic firing that was coming from more distant parts of the town. This I guessed must come from the radio station and the airport road.

With the coming of daylight I saw across the road from my villa a Belgian couple standing in their open doorway so I went over and joined them. The husband turned out to be a judge of the High Court, a Luxembourger by the name of Bosseler. Madam very kindly suggested a cup of coffee which was most welcome at that hour and so refreshed we discussed the events of the night particularly the fate of Tshombe and his Ministers. The judge, who had many years of experience in the Katanga behind him, was quite convinced that force could have been avoided and that negotiation with Tshombe would have achieved results. His attitude was typical of a learned judge for he sided neither with Tshombe or the UN. His views were impartial and as he talked I thought to myself that it would be a tragedy if men like this were forced to leave the country. Yet that was what the UN was doing. It wanted to sweep the Katanga clean of Belgians and would stoop at nothing vile to achieve its ends, at least under O'Brien's directions.

I stayed talking with these nice people until about 6 o'clock when I longed, above all else, for a cup of tea. The firing had all but died down in the vicinity of the Post Office but the odd shot still went on in and around the city. But the Rue Albert was perfectly quiet so I decided to walk down to the main Etoile, cross the wide boulevards, and beg a cup of tea off Mrs Dunnett, the wife of the British Consul. There was an hour to fill in before I was due at the offices of Union Miniere which was only a stones throw from the Consulate. The judge was all against my going and begged me to wait until the sun was properly up and tempers had cooled. He thought that to venture out at this time might be dangerous as indeed it might have been. But I was adamant. In any case I wanted to have a chat with the Consul, Debzil Dunnett before leaving for Rhodesia and in all probability he had some messages for me to send off on his behalf.

I had hardly closed the gate of the judge's villa when along the grass verge, keeping well in the cover of the hedgerows, there came a party of Katangese soldiers. They were carrying their weapons and obviously intent on finding some place of safety in which to hide up. Crouching low they hurried past me paying no attention to a lone Englishman out for a morning stroll. Apart from these poor devils the streets were deserted but as I crossed the Etoile I saw a body sprawled in the gutter. Someone had

been gun happy which of course is the danger if fighting breaks out. Perhaps an old score had been paid off.

Apart from the smell of cordite in the air the tree lined Etoile was as lovely as ever. There was still the odd firing in the distance but otherwise all was quiet as I turned into the Consuls house. It is an unpretentious Colonial type building set back from the road and partly obscured by trees. My guess that Densil and his family would be up and about proved to be correct and I was welcomed by the Dunnett family and promised my longed for cup of tea. Denzil was looking tired and very worried. He looked as if he had been under great strain which was not surprising in view of what had happened during the night and the fact that he had with him his two young children who had flown out from England for their summer holidays. But there was another reason why the Consul was worried as I was soon to discover. When his children had left the room in which we were chatting he whispered to me that Tshombe was in the house having sought sanctuary under the Union Jack in the early hours of the morning and would I like a word with him?

It was rather a dishevelled President of the Katanga I found with three or four of his Aides. (To get to the Consulate he had climbed over the back wall of his palace). But in spite of his appearance he was in good heart for a man who has seen his Government toppled by armour and his Ministers probably arrested. He had no news of his colleagues and was inclined to chuckle over his own escape over a wall to avoid the UN who, as I was later to discover, had made such a nonsense of operation "Morthor" as it was named by O'Brien, that they had failed to seal off Tshombe's palace and he could in fact have walked to safety out of his own front gate.

And so it was that I sipped my tea whilst the small party of Africans finished their coffee. Tshombe had sensibly ordered a cease fire before leaving his palace knowing that it was useless to sacrifice more lives in a hopeless attempt to hold the key points in the town. But he was by no means "down and out". Even at that early hour there was plenty of fight left in the man and I think this stemmed from the fact that he knew he had the majority of people in the Katanga behind him and all he stood for.

When Denzil explained that I was shortly leaving for Rhodesia in my care there was a gabble of French and I gathered that his companions were trying to persuade the President to come with me. I would have taken him with pleasure but Tshombe was not the sort of man to run away and desert his people. He knew that there was work to be done and I think he was already prepared to go into hiding and to carry on the fight. After all, he had several thousand men under arms and everything to lose by

seeking refuge out of Katanga. He certainly went up in my estimation that morning particularly when one of his men came into the Consulate and urged him to leave the house immediately. As he left to go by a back door he turned to me and said "tell your Prime Minister that my Government has fallen by force of arms but we shall fight on. My men have not died in vain." With these words the leader of his people departed to carry on the fight against the UN. I was never to see Tshombe again.

I couldn't help laughing to myself at the thought of O'Brien's chagrin when he learned that Tshombe had been allowed to slip through his fingers. It is described in his book in which an attempt is made to explain how the mistake originated. There was no question about it. The UN consisted on top of a bunch of amateurs playing a game they didn't understand. At Headquarters there were language difficulties and also jealousies amongst the mixed forces. The Indians carried out their task to a timetable set by Brigadier Raja who commanded them but as O'Brien admits, the operation went off the rails from the start.

One amusing incident that occurred I must relate. Just before leaving the Consulate, Denzil's son, on holiday from Eton, told me with great pride that he had recorded the sound of the battle on his tape machine and was taking it back to England with him as his souvenir of the Katanga. A few days later Mrs Dunnett and her children stayed with me and the tape was certainly being taken back to school. I wish that I had taped the firing from my vantage point behind the Swedish armoured car. It would indeed have been a reminder of a night I shall not forget in a hurry.

Apart from the occasional shot in the distance all was quiet as, having said goodbye to the Dunnetts and collected the diplomatic mail, I walked over to the offices of Union Miniere where I found all my friends anxiously awaiting me. They had begun to worry least I had come to some harm during the night. We discussed the situation and then I got busy sending off messages which in minutes would be flashed to Salisbury and Johannesburg telling my directors what had happened at Elisabethville.

I have no doubt that these were passed on to official quarters as there were no other means of communication out of the city. To a journalist it would have been a scoop but I always made a point of keeping well clear of the Press as I wanted no publicity.

It was a strange party who met in conference at that early hour. None of us had much sleep yet we were wide awake. Decisions were quickly made and cables drafted to Brussels for me to transmit including one requesting that a powerful transmitter be flown immediately for my

collection so that UMHK could be independent of the normal services which were now in UN hands. It was to be my job to get permission from the Federal authorities for the use by them for this transmitter in Rhodesia. We had to hurry as the Belgians knew that it was the intention of the UN to set up road blocks so that the town was in all ways effectively sealed off from the outside world but so futile were their efforts that by the time I headed homewards I never saw a soul on the road as I drove as never before.

The union Miniere offices are set in lovely gardens with a wide sweeping drive flanked by trees, shrubs, and flower beds. We were all saying goodbye and admiring the beauty of the garden and its peace after such a disturbed night, when a Red Cross ambulance drew up with a screech of brakes. From it staggered a man wearing the white overalls and helmet of the International Red Cross. From head to foot he was covered in blood and with sheer exhaustion collapsed into the arms of my friends who had to half carry him into the building. He was M. Andre van Roey, a director of the Bank of Katanga and also a keen worker of the International Red Cross. Later, from a report sent to me for relaying to Geneva, I learned how the banker had become so blood stained. Apparently a plainly marked ambulance rescuing some badly wounded African troops from the scene of the fighting round the Post Office had been shot up by UN troops. Van Roey had helped unload what was left of these unfortunate men. He was not a pretty sight.

Yet O'Brien, in his attempt to defend the UN from the charge of having used excessive force and committed atrocities has this to say in his book:

"The reader in England or the United States, or Ireland or Sweden took the "eye-witness accounts" of these people at their face value. Statements of "X" a doctor, "Y" a priest, "Z" a Red Cross worker sounded impartial and reliable and were always heavily damaging to the United Nations. What the reader did not realise was that all these people were fighting the United Nations, by word of mouth always and often with weapons in their hands as well. Thus the reader might be shocked by the testimony of M. Andre van Roey, a particularly observant "Red Cross Worker". He was a Red Cross Worker, he was also a director of the Bank of Katanga, and classified by the United Nations as a political advisor, (with short respite as a technician)." O'Brien has stated his case and made it clear that the banker was on the short list for deportation. He was suspect both as banker and as a public spirited worker for the Red Cross. I can assure the learned Irishman that M van Roey was putting on no act when I saw him that morning. The reader will be able to judge for himself. What I saw with my eyes was stark reality. On his own confession O'Brien and his UN

henchmen were closeted in the "Villa des Roche" at that hour stunned by their failure to apprehend the leading man.

I beat my own time record on the road that morning and at the Rhodesian border post learned that no other vehicles from the Congo had come through. As I still had fifty miles to drive I telephoned my wife to tell her that I was safely back. She told me that my signals had already been passed to the Government offices and that the District Commissioner would be waiting at the house as he wished to take a statement from me. This done I began to deal with the traffic that was coming over our network. Needless to say the situation in the Katanga was very confused and I am sure that some of the reports I received at this time were exaggerated. But at least they followed much the same pattern. It was clear that Tshombe's resistance was by no means over and that the UN was universally condemned for having provoked the Katangese by the use of excessive force. Typical of then messages I handled during the next forty eight hours were the following:

Under the signatures of the Consuls for the following countries: Belgium, Portugal, France, Greece and Sweden, to be passed to their respective governments... "At Elisabethville after 30 hours uninterrupted battle between Katanga army and UNO the latter has declared itself to be on the defensive and unexpected repeated assaults at many points in the town. No electric current. We are without communications to the interior and exterior. The local situation is very grave. President Tshombe has taken the head of the resistance movement. He has called upon Katanga to total warfare. The BCK (Railway) hospital is occupied by an Irish section which is resisting. The Belgian Consulate has been intentionally bombarded. The residence of the French Consul has been transferred into a strongpoint by the Katanga forces. The Portuguese Consulate is under fire from two batteries. The United States Consul is under the protection of the UN.

From the Katanga Red Cross addressed to International Red Cross, Switzerland:

"Red Cross of Katanga ask you to intervene with UNO to stop the use of hospitals as strong points and the repeated firing against ambulances and Red Cross personnel. Ambulance service personnel have been severely wounded. Please send an International Red Cross Commission to determine the facts on the spot."

Perhaps at that time the most disturbing news came from Jadotville where a contingent of some 100 Irish troops of the UN had been cut off by the Katangese army. I feared reprisals for the attack on Elisabethville with

feelings running so high. The fate of these troops hung in the balance for some days and to me became a source of great worry. Knowing the respect with which the locals held the Belgian head of the Jadotville station I asked him to use his influence to prevent a slaughter of innocent men and he promised to do his best. The Irish really had no alternative but to surrender and this I hoped would be the final outcome of the affair.

Meanwhile, at Elisabethville, there was a state of siege. The Post Office area resembled a fortress according to my reports for here the Indians were in control. There was heavy fighting at night according to the Director General of UMHK who in a message to his Brussels office added that the UN had installed a mortar on the roof of the BCK hospital overlooking the main square. There had been a clash between UN and Tshombe forces in front of the Katanga Parliament buildings and it was reported that two Swedish soldiers had been killed.

Now O'Brien would probably say that these were reports aimed at discrediting the United Nations throughout the world but the fact remains that from numerous sources they came streaming in and it was obvious that operation "Morthor" had backfired. ("Morthor" is a Hindi word meaning "smash" and it was appropriate that an Indian codeword was used as the Ghurkas and Dogras had done the attacking. It meant in O'Brien's language that the Katanga issue was to be settled by force). But from the comfort of his villa O'Brien was unlikely to know what was really going on since the first shot was fired. I am not for one moment pretending that the Katangese were blameless. What I can say is that for nearly a year and a half under Tshombe's rule things like this had not happened. No, Operation "Morthor" had ignited a flame that was to take a long time to extinguish. A reign of terror had been started.

I got little sleep in those days as so much of the traffic being handled was for my personal attention and could not be delegated. Fortunately I had an efficient staff who could cope with the day to day affairs of the business leaving me free for the other and more important work of maintaining contact with all that was going on over the border.

There was one message I dealt with that raised my hopes that Britain was intervening to bring some sense of reason to the UN. It came from Lord Alport the British High Commissioner in Salisbury and was addressed to the British Consul in Elisabethville. It read:

"Lord Landsdown accompanied by Wilford of the African Department and Powell-Jones are due in Elisabethville 17th September by Sabena flight number 529." The wheels of diplomacy were beginning to move. Lord Landsdown had flown to Leopoldville on the 15th to add weight to his

Ambassador, Mr Riches, in fact Britain was threatening to withdraw her support to UNO mission in the Congo. In doing this Britain was acting in defiance of the United States of America which was backing the Congo operation to the hilt including the use of force in the Katanga. It was indeed through pressure by Britain that Mr Hammarskjold decided to fly to Ndola to meet Tshombe.

But to me, looking back, it must have been an impossible task to use the channels of diplomacy against the blatant lying of the UN. There is no question about the lies put out to justify the attack on Elisabethville. They are admitted by O'Brien in his book, in fact he describes this one as the "Big Lie". This is what was contained in a document issued from UN headquarters in Leopoldville on the 14th September.

"In the early hours of September 13th the UN forces therefore took security precautions similar to those applied on August 28th, (when the Post Office and Radio Station were occupied), and deemed necessary to prevent inflammatory broadcasts or other threats to the maintenance of law and order, while the UN resumed carrying out its task of apprehending and evacuating foreign military and para-military personnel. At this point, an alert was set since arson was discovered at the UN garage. As the UN troops were proceeding towards the garage premises, fire was opened on them from the building where a number of foreign officers are known to be staying. UN troops were subsequently also resisted and fired at as they were deploying towards key points or while they were guarding installations in the city."

It is unbelievable that grown men in positions of authority should resort to such lying and expect the world to believe it. Does it not suggest that the Swede Dr Linner and his UN colleagues at the time thought themselves beyond criticism wielding such power that they could get away with murder and no-one would find them out. O'Brien has labelled this document as a pack of lies. If there had been a shred of truth in it then I must have known that someone was going to start a fire in the garage and I suppose the UN troops were confined to barracks all day so that they could be ready to put it out. But I fear this was typical of all that went on in those days. How could normal diplomacy possibly succeed? There is the other example as disclosed by O'Brien in his statement that his instructions to use force came verbally from Mr Khiari, the Tunisian who at that time was Head of UN Civil Operations in the Congo. Mr Khiari, he claims, was in direct touch with the Secretary General by means of specially coded telegrams which were never shown to him. Now there is strong doubt as to whether Mr Hammarskjold did in fact ever issue instructions to use force against Tshombe.

On the face of it the blame and everlasting disgrace of the World Body seems divided between the plotters in New York, the UN administration in Leopoldville, the game of power politics played by the US, and the unfortunate O'Brien who eventually was made the scapegoat and forced to resign. Even worse than that was to be told that the Irish Foreign Service had no further use for his services. He had not added to his popularity by a divorce action and the fact that the lady he was subsequently to marry was living at the "Villa des Roches" whilst all this drama was being enacted.

Whilst all this was going on "Our Man from the Katanga" was flitting in and out of Elisabethville when not staying with me or rushing off to Salisbury. He seemed to have the capacity to work day and night without becoming exhausted and I am sure he was doing some good work on behalf of his government. My household had by now increased with the arrival from Brussels of the communications engineer who soon made contact with his headquarters in Belgium. Thus we now had at our disposal direct links from Jadotville to Brussels and with these added channels the amount of traffic increased throughout the twenty four hours.

From his hiding place at Kipushi, which is a mining centre right on the Rhodesian border, Tshombe was directing his campaign of resistance with some effect. His whereabouts were unknown to the UN who thought he had sought refuge in Rhodesia and Welensky was suspected of giving him support. Actually, at that time Sir Roy had not met Tschombe although he was his biggest champion in those dark days. At a later date the Katanga President was to seek the Federal Prime Minister's advice in person. O'Brien firmly believed that Sir Roy was giving aid to the secessionists that arms were being smuggled in and Federal troops actually infiltrated into the Katanga in support of Tshombe's fight for freedom. But if words could have helped Tshombe's cause then Sir Roy could rightly he accused of aiding the breakaway Province. As Rhodesia's neighbour the Federal Government was gravely concerned at the turn of events particularly when the UIN resorted force. Sir Roy was throughout kept well informed and there is no doubt in which direction his sympathies lay. He was all for giving Tshombe a chance to keep the peace in his own Province although as a statesman he did his best to persuade the younger man to come to some agreement with the Central Government. On the Tshombe issue Sir Roy fought the British Government tooth and nail. On the diplomatic front in Salisbury there was an open rift with Lord Alport as is clear from the subsequent published writings of both men. But as the man on the spot I can say categorically that apart from medical supplies and essential foodstuffs nothing that could be described as war material was exported

to the Katanga during the crisis. This is not to say that Tshombe didn't ask for help of a material kind as the following signal shows:

16th September 1961 – 11:20 hours

“Please pass immediately to Sir Roy Welensky:

“President Tshombe signals Gizenga Communist troops have arrived at Nyunzu and are proceeding southwards. We ask for Rhodesian intervention if they reach a certain point southwards. Could you lend us right away two fighter planes to be sent to Kolwezi aerodrome. Also six recoilless guns with 100 rounds each. We could collect them in Solwezi. Jadotville aerodrome only 33000 feet long. Jadotville and Kolwezi are under control. Please address reply Tshombe care Amici Jadotville through same channel.

Signed Amichi for Tschombe.”

Note: Solwezi is a remote village in Rhodesia connected by a little used road to Tshombe's hiding place at Kipushi. It is by far the longest route out from the Katanga and being only a rough track was only used in fact known to few people. When the normal routes were blocked by the UN my Belgian friends had used the road to bring through some W/T equipment.

As I had no direct connection with Sir Roy I personally handed the signal to the local District Commissioner and had all copies in my office destroyed apart from my master copy from which I quote. After that I have no idea what happened to it. I presume it reached Sir Roy but it was never to my knowledge acknowledged; certainly not through my channels.

I believe that Amichi (or Amici) was the then Mayor of Jadotville. It could have been sent without Tshombe's knowledge for stranger things than that happened in those days.

When news of Mr Hammarskjold's impending arrival at Ndola to meet Tschombe reached me, I saw a ray of hope that a sensible solution would be reached to end the troubles in the Katanga. O'Brien believes that the Secretary General's mission to Rhodesia was to give satisfaction to the British Government and to an extent I think he is right in that conclusion. Certainly the British were taking the lead in this vital International matter. I knew this by the traffic I handled and the fact that “Our Man from the Katanga” was being used as the “go-between” whose job it was to bring Tshombe to the conference table. He knew where the latter was in hiding. How I do not know for we never discussed each other's business. My friend from London was not a man given to taking half measures. It must

have been on a Saturday that he got his orders to seek out Tshombe for that night he made a plan for the following day. He had decided that the easiest way to reach Kipushi would be by helicopter and as there happened to be one in the district carrying out work for one of the mining groups, (bringing out geological samples from remote areas being explored), he decided to find the pilot and to persuade him to undertake the flight.

We set off together and had to search high and low in the numerous places where on a Saturday night men foregather to drink their beer. It was quite late when we ran the pilot to ground and in a matter of minutes all was settled. The two of them would fly in to Kipushi early the following morning. It was not far to travel by air but care had to be taken not to embarrass any Federal troops who might be deployed on the border.

It was left to me to explain to the Chairman of the group concerned, who happened to be staying on the Copperbelt, that his chartered helicopter had been "borrowed" for the day by the British Government. I do not think he was at all amused.

By mid afternoon there was no sign of my house guest and I began to worry a bit as did the High Commissioner in Salisbury who telephoned me for news. I had visions of taking one of our Landrovers to go in search of the missing men but fortunately they turned up at tea time none the worse for their adventures over the border. Tshombe had agreed to meet the Secretary General and the job now was to hire sufficient light aircraft to fly the party out.

News was still coming in from Jadotville where the Irish were now properly cut off. Reinforcements could not reach them as Tshombe's men were holding the bridges on the road from Elisabethville. Surrender was inevitable as water supplies to the area in which they were trapped had been cut off. Surrender they did on the 17th. Apart from one wounded there were no casualties and the men were not badly treated. Some days were to pass before they were finally handed back and much haggling went on as to the terms of their release but there is no doubt that Tshombe scored a point and brought home to the UN that he still had his army more or less intact and the will of the Katangese behind him.

The day of the Irish surrender coincided with Mr Hammerskjold's departure from Leopoldville on his flight to meet Tshombe which we all hoped would see a ceasefire brought about. All eyes now turned to Ndola where the meeting was to take place. There was feverish activity in my house and the telephone never stopped ringing as final preparations were made to bring in the Tshombe party from Kipushi in light aircraft

chartered from Lusaka. Kipushi had no proper runway, only a cleared bumpy stretch of a few hundred yards which would only manage a lightly loaded small plane. For this reason the delegation had to be reduced in size to what the aircraft could lift off the ground. All had to be organised in detail and the responsibility for this fell on the shoulders of "Our Man in the Katanga".

Throughout all these comings and goings I was a mere figure in the wings and did not travel to Ndola having no part to play in what was to turn out to be a tragic drama. I knew the meeting was scheduled for some time after midnight; that Lord Landsdown was flying in from Leopoldville and meeting Lord Alport at the aerodrome; that Mr Hammarskjold would then arrive to get down to the business of a ceasefire with Tshombe. Quite frankly I was amazed that such a timetable should be drawn up for so momentous a meeting. All the characters involved had for days, if not weeks, been living under great strain and tension. All that Ndola had to offer was a bleak airfield and a Manager's office barely large enough to swing a cat. Add to that an hour after midnight when man's spirits are at their lowest ebb. Yet it seemed that politics and protocol prevented the Secretary General and the others concerned from having a good night's sleep before conducting their meeting. I viewed it all from the point of view of a businessman for I could not see my directors agreeing to an important meeting under such circumstances. Lives and the fate of a country were at stake. The eyes of the world were on Ndola yet the talks were being arranged under the most impossible and intolerable conditions, instead of being conducted in the light of day by men refreshed with sleep.

My house was strangely quiet that night after the bustle of the past few days and I went to bed early having, I knew, a heavy day ahead of me. When I got to my office early the next morning I knew nothing of what had happened forty miles away but I had barely cleared my desk when an urgent message came through from the British Consulate in Elisabethville. It read as follows:

"O'Brien is concerned about Hammarskjold - stop. He left Leopoldville last evening in a DC6 and was expected Ndola about midnight - stop. Please inform me immediately you have any news"

This was the first I had heard regarding the Secretary General's failure to arrive as planned and I was even more surprised by the news that O'Brien had not accompanied him as it was thought that the latter would join the flight at Kamina. O'Brien had clearly gone to the Consulate thinking that they had communications with Ndola but what puzzled me, and still does,

is by what means the news reached Elisabethville that Mr Hammarskjold's plane had not arrived. I can only assume that UN Leopoldville expected word from the aircraft carrying the Secretary General and when this did not materialise had signalled Elisabethville asking for information.

The reply I received from Ndola was simply that Mr Hammarskjold's plane had not landed on schedule. Beyond that there was no information either than guesswork that he would be arriving that morning. I replied to this effect in my signal to the Consulate never for one moment thinking that anything had gone amiss. The shock was to come later when the news reached me that the DC6 had been found crashed by a woodcutter in hilly country not far from Ndola. All the passengers and crew had been killed instantly with the exception of one man whose condition was very serious.

And so had died under the most tragic circumstances the one man who might have brought peace to the Katanga. I believed him to be an honourable man who had been deceived by those put in charge of UN affairs in the Congo. For there is no doubt about it, the UN had resorted to every form of deceit and lie to justify its actions in the Katanga. As far as I am concerned it stands discredited for all time.

Within hours of the crashed aircraft being found the world became rife with rumours of the wildest kind. Tshombe's forces were said to have shot down the plane and report from Ghana accused the British Government and Sir Roy Welensky of having plotted Mr Hammarskjold's death. There was no end to such nonsense.

It is now possible to reconstruct the drama of that fateful night at the Ndola airport and for the benefit of readers who have not read the numerous published accounts of the disaster I will attempt to unravel it. All the evidence has been sifted and weighed by both a Federal Government enquiry headed by the Chief Justice and also by the United Nations themselves. There is only one conclusion to be reached. The crash itself was due to "pilot error". There can be no doubt about that but what does remain an unsolved mystery to this day is what caused the plane to change its course when coming in to land in normal fashion and in radio contact with ground control at Ndola. What prompted this sudden change of plan on the part of the pilot? This we shall never know.

The technical investigation was carried out by a very dear friend of mine, Colonel Perkins (Perky) one of Britain's greatest authorities on sabotage. He was quite satisfied that the plane had not been interfered with in any way likely to cause it to crash. A certain amount of speculation was caused when it was discovered that two of the bodies contained wounds caused by bullets but it was proved that these had not passed through

gun barrels. (The Secretary General had his own armed bodyguards on board which accounts for the presence of ammunition which must have exploded when the plane hit the ground. The bodyguard's guns had not been fired).

The story begins in Leopoldville where Lord Landsdown was having talks with Mr Hammarskjold prompted to some extent by the firm stand being made in Salisbury by Sir Roy Welensky who maintained with all the strength at his command that the UN was playing a sinister role in the Katanga. When Mr Hammarskjold agreed to meet Tshombe to bring about a ceasefire a meeting was arranged at Ndola airport and the arrangements for this were left in the hands of Lord Alport, the British High Commissioner in Salisbury. "Our Man in the Katanga" did the rest as has already been told. And so, on September 17th, Lord Alport flies hurriedly to Ndola arriving in the afternoon. The airport is sealed off by police and the tiny Manager's office made ready for the conference. The British Consul arrives by road from Elisabethville. At 5pm the Tshombe party arrives in two small chartered planes having flown from Kipushi just over the border. The long wait begins.

Just before 11pm Lord Landsdown flies in from Leopoldville. His stay is a brief one as he had promised Mr Hammarskjold that he would leave Ndola before the latter arrived. This was undoubtedly a political manoeuvre. Britain was already heavily involved in the peace talks and it might have been wrongly interpreted had he participated in the talks with Tshombe. For the same reason Sir Roy Welensky stayed away.

Lord Landsdown was persuaded to have a word or two with Tshombe and then his plane took off for Salisbury.

It was nearly midnight when Airport Control reported that contact had been made with an aircraft which it believed must be carrying Mr Hammarskjold but the pilot was most secretive about his flight and his passengers and refused to answer the normal incoming flight questions apart from requesting petrol. The plane was on a course for the Ndola airport; the lights had been switched on and all was in readiness to receive the distinguished visitor. It was at this point that the VIF aircraft changed its set course and lost contact with the ground.

Came 3am and still no sign of the UN plane. The airport Manager's office was cold and cheerless. Spirits were indeed low amongst those who had waited so long and patiently. It was decided that if Mr Hammarskjold had changed his mind and overflown Ndola and gone to Elisabethville for one reason or another he would not come in until daylight. The party broke up and found temporary accommodation for what was left of the night. Lord

Alport tried to sleep in his plane without any success. Everyone was miserable after hopes had been raised so high that a solution would be found to the Katanga problem.

By 10am there was still no news apart from the urgent signal I had received from the Consulate enquiring after Mr Hammarskjold's whereabouts. Lord Alport decided to return to Salisbury and Tshombe and his party announced that they would fly back to Kipushi.

Before noon the news reached me that the wreck of the plane had been found not far from Ndola by a woodcutter. Mr Hammarskjold was dead.

Everyone was asking questions but the burning one was what had caused the Secretary General, or his crew Captain, to change his mind at the last minute when already the plane was on a direct course for Ndola and was in touch with ground control. Here the mystery deepens. "Was the plane diverted and if so by whom". It is all suspicious to say the least. All that is left to do is examine the facts as known.

- 1) The pilot was a very experienced one but that night he was flying without a navigator aboard which would have added to his responsibilities particularly as he had flown a most circuitous course presumably to ensure Mr Hammarskjold's safety from air attack by Katanga's air force. (This of course is laughable as Tshombe had no planes capable of interception at night). But the pilot must have been tired and only too pleased to make contact with Ndola control. He was right on course and had only to cruise in to land. The people waiting at the airfield actually heard the aircraft's engines in the still night air. Yet for some reason the pilot changed course and headed inland. The question is "why"?
- 2) It is known that the particular aircraft being used could communicate with Leopoldville by radio when actually in flight. Did Mr Hammarskjold receive some disturbing message of sufficient importance to make him change his plans? Was he diverted?
- 3) The above can be discounted if in fact it was Leopoldville who caused O'Brien early that morning to contact the British Consulate asking, as a matter of urgency, for information about the NON ARRIVAL at Ndola of the VIP plane. If it wasn't Leopoldville then I must ask the question, "how did O'Brien know that Mr Hammarskjold had not landed as planned?" If the inquiry originated at Ndola it is important to know who informed O'Brien and by what means.

In his book "To Katanga and Back" O'Brien devotes little space to the death of his chief or the reactions to the crash on himself or the other

members of the Elisabethville UN staff. At this point the book does not run true to form. The otherwise voluble Irishman is singularly silent on the subject and he certainly omits to mention that he was so worried that he sought the help of the British Consulate in order to find out what had happened to the plane. This he did before 10am in the morning which suggests to me that he had contact with Ndola through a source of his own. I think I know that source which in the interest of truth must be revealed.